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Free to Deployed Areas

A member of a Cameroon-Nigerian special operations team climbs aboard the USNS Spearhead during an exercise in the Gulf of Guinea.

STEVEN BEARDSLEY/Stars and Stripes



SEA | Gulf of Guinea states CHANGE? seek outside help to curb maritime crime

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

ABOARD THE USNS SPEARHEAD — Team members wore different uniforms, spoke separate languages and relied on hand signals to communicate.

Made up of forces from Cameroon and Nigeria — neighboring countries that have historically shared little beyond a border — the special operations team inched forward together through the tight passages of this Navy catamaran during a recent vessel boarding exercise in the Gulf of Guinea.

The drill, part of a larger Navy-hosted exercise held over several days in April, offered a glimpse of how local forces might work together to stop the kind of maritime crime that plagues this region.

It's one of several signs of change in the area, where nations that have struggled to police territorial waters are embracing new offers for help.

SEE CHANGE ON PAGE 6

Shinseki 'mad as hell' over VA claims

Senators grill Shinseki about health care flaps

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Embattled Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki urged patience from Capitol Hill lawmakers Thursday as his agency investigates reports of falsified wait times and staff cover-ups at agency hospitals and clinics across the country.

The secretary said he is "mad as hell"

about the allegations, but senators on the Veterans' Affairs Committee pointed to at least 50 prior federal reports on VA problems and pressed for immediate action to change agency practices and culture.

Shinseki's job appears under threat as the Department of Veterans Affairs is rocked by reports of wrongdoing surfacing in at least 10 states. In Arizona, allegations surfaced in late April that a Phoenix VA hospital kept a secret list concealing long waits for health treatment while 40 veterans died.

Veterans' groups and members of Congress have called for Shinseki to resign, and the VA inspector general has launched a probe in Phoenix. That probe will not be completed until August.

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Shinseki

PREAKNESS

California Chrome installed as huge favorite at Pimlico

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FACES

Dolly Parton stays true to herself as new album debuts

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NATION

Dedication event held for Sept. 11 museum in NY

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I think I'm fully capable of doing the job, and I don't think it's rocket science by any means — not if you just listen to the people."

—17-year-old Saira Blair after beating an incumbent West Virginia delegate in Tuesday's election

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COMING SOON

Fitness

If the shoe fits ...



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MIDEAST

Second round of Afghan voting set for June 14

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

Afghanistan's top two presidential candidates are officially headed to a runoff scheduled for June 14 after neither secured the majority votes needed to avoid a second round.

On Thursday, election officials formally announced the official vote tally from the April 5 election. Mirroring preliminary numbers, former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah gathered 45 percent while former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani received 31.6 percent of the votes.

Another former foreign minister, Zalmay Rassoul, was seen as a favorite of current President Hamid Karzai, but garnered only 11.4 percent. On Sunday, he announced that he was throwing his support to Abdullah.

The other five presidential candidates each drew support in the single digits in the first round of voting.

Abdullah welcomed a second round and said he was confident

that turnout would once again be high.

Election officials said the numbers released on Thursday took into account hundreds of fraud complaints, but the investigations did not significantly change the preliminary percentages.

At a news conference after the announcement, Ghani complained that more ballots should have been discarded because of fraud, but he said he would participate in the runoff and predicted that he would double his vote count from the first round.

The Electoral Complaints Commission, which was tasked with sorting through the complaints, invalidated roughly 400,000 votes. That is fewer than half of the more than 1 million votes that were thrown out during the 2009 election, in which Abdullah cited fraud and corruption when he quit rather than participate in a runoff against Karzai.

In total, more than 6.6 million Afghans voted in this election, 36 percent of whom were women, according to election officials.

The Independent Election Commission laid out the timetable for the constitutionally mandated runoff between Abdullah and Ghani. A second round of campaigning will be allowed between May 22 and June 11, with the vote scheduled for Saturday,



Ghani



Josh Smith/Stars and Stripes

Afghan presidential frontrunner Abdullah Abdullah speaks to reporters after casting his vote on April 5. Abdullah and runner-up Ashraf Ghani are headed to a runoff election scheduled for June 14.

June 14. The winner is expected to be announced in July.

The United Nations' representative in Afghanistan, Jan Kubiš, called on Afghan officials to do more to prevent fraud and urged candidates to respect the results, but he praised the process, which for the first time was exclusively overseen by Afghans.

"Afghans can justifiably be proud of their elections," he said in a statement. "On election day, Afghan men and women demonstrated their desire to live in peace, dignity and prosperity. Democratic choice prevailed over violence and coercion."

The runoff extends an election process whose conclusion many Afghans and international governments are impatiently awaiting so the country can move forward.

Karzai has refused to sign a bilateral security agreement with the United States that allows for thousands of troops to remain in

the country past the end of the year when all international combat forces are to be withdrawn. Both Abdullah and Ghani have said they would sign the deal, but the long electoral process means that U.S. military plans may be up in the air for months.

The second round of voting will also take place in the historically violent summer fighting season, when Taliban and other insurgent attacks typically increase. The Taliban launched their spring offensive on Monday, with attacks around the country that claimed the lives of at least 16 people.

Despite threats and a campaign of violence in the early months of this year, the Taliban were unable to deliver on promises to disrupt the election. Analysts fear that the insurgent group may redouble its efforts during a second round.

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Afghan, Pakistani border guards' skirmish leaves 1 dead

The Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — A shootout between Afghan and Pakistani border guards killed one Afghan policeman Thursday in a remote southern region where the border between the two countries is poorly marked, officials said.

According to police spokes-

man Zia Durrani in the Afghan province of Kandahar, the skirmish started shortly after dawn and lasted about two hours. The two sides engaged in sporadic exchanges, using rifles and firing rockets across the border, he said.

Kandahar government spokesman Dawakhan Minapal said the fighting in the province's remote

Maroof district was sparked by an attempt by the Pakistani border police to construct an outpost on the Afghan side of the border. Pakistani official Asif Yusufzai said his country's paramilitary forces retaliated after the Afghan forces started shooting first. He said he didn't have any details on whether anyone was killed or wounded.

Pakistani forces have been constructing a checkpoint on their side of the border, and the Afghan forces have been raising objections against it, added Yusufzai, who is the top official in the southwestern district of Qila Saifullah along the border with Afghanistan.

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MIDEAST



Sgt. Robert Metcalf, with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, watches over the beach from an observation post as Marines work into the evening hours establishing a base camp along the shore.

PHOTOS BY HENDRICK SIMOES/Stars and Stripes



Chief Petty Officer Daniel Chavez, a craft master, navigates his landing craft carrying Marines from the USS Gunston Hall to the beach in Djibouti, where a base camp is being established.

Related video

Watch the 22nd MEU at work at stars.com/go/beachlanding



By evening, the amphibious assault vehicles from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit push inland, where they encounter simulated enemy resistance.



Marines with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit taking a break get unexpected visitors.

A world away from Normandy, troops practice modern-day beach landing

BY HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

DIJIBOUTI

The world may never see another amphibious landing like the ones that characterized the U.S. war effort in World War II.

Next month is the 70th anniversary of D-Day, when 5,000 ships and landing craft transported 176,000 Allied troops directly to the beaches of Normandy.

During that war, a series of other massive landings were conducted in North Africa, Italy and across the Pacific. In the Korean War, troops were also moved in that way.

Today, the U.S. Marines maintain

‘We would never again do a kind of a Tarawa landing where we are landing into the face of the enemy defenses.’

Brig. Gen. Gregg Olson
commander of Task Force 51/59

and exercise the capability to conduct “forced-entry operations,” but changes in technology have led to sweeping changes in tactics.

“We would never again do a kind of a Tarawa landing where we are landing into the face of the enemy defenses,” Brig. Gen. Gregg Olson, commander of

Task Force 51/59, said last month, referring to the three-day battle in the Gilbert Islands in 1943 in which more than 3,500 were killed or wounded.

Olson, who is in charge of the amphibious forces deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet, said in an interview during an exercise here in mid-April that an

amphibious landing today would likely involve using the inherent maneuverability of the U.S. military and essentially landing where the enemy is not.

“Move to the sound of the guns, but do so in a smarter way,” Olson said.

In this series of pictures on a beach in Djibouti, a location frequently used for Marine Corps exercises, members of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit come ashore from the dock landing ship USS Gunston Hall to practice a modern-day beach landing.

The exercise ran from April 15 through the end of the month.

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Two amphibious assault vehicles with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit reach the shore, each carrying about 20 combat-loaded Marines.

MILITARY

Group, watchdog create VA whistleblower site

By CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — As Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki prepared Thursday morning for a Senate grilling over alleged abuse and fraud in his agency, a veterans' service organization and a government watchdog group announced a new website designed to give VA whistleblowers a safe place to vent.

The website, VAoversight.org, is a joint effort of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and the Project On Government

Oversight, or POGO.

The site, which gives whistleblowers the option of providing contact information, features bold-face warnings to avoid using a government computer or phone to submit complaints. It also contains links to other online security tools to minimize detection.

"It takes a lot of courage to step forward and put one's career at risk," POGO Executive Director Danielle Brian said in a news release. "Whistleblowers shouldn't have to go it alone. We can help whistleblowers hold the VA ac-

countable, and keep the focus on solutions rather than attempts to hunt down those who voiced concerns."

The VA is facing a wave of reports about fraudulent record-keeping and scheduling practices designed to cover up long wait times for appointments. Delays in receiving care allegedly have caused the deaths of scores of veterans around the country.

"IAVA members are outraged, as new reports of mismanagement and cooking the books seem to arise daily," IAVA Chief Policy Officer Tom Tarantino said in a



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

The Phoenix VA Health Care Center in Phoenix is at the center of allegations of fraudulent record-keeping and scheduling practices.

news release. "Secretary Shinseki has finally started to emerge publicly and address these allegations, but short-term, reactive measures will not eradicate the more pervasive problems that are causing veterans to lose

faith in the system. VA has a long way to go to earn back the trust and confidence of the millions of veterans shaken by this growing controversy."

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Shinseki: VA chief says he intends to continue 'mission'

FROM FRONT PAGE

On Wednesday, President Barack Obama directed one of his top advisers to assist in a review of the VA service, which constitutes the largest integrated health care system in the United States and serves 6.5 million vets per year.

White House Deputy Chief of Staff Rob Nabors will be temporarily assigned to the VA to work on a review focused on policies for patient safety rules and the scheduling of patient appointments, officials said Wednesday.

The Associated Press noted that the move is similar to the action the White House took last year when it assigned longtime Obama aide Jeffrey Zients to take over management of the troubled HealthCare.gov website from officials at the Health and Human Services Department. HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius later resigned her post.

"If any of these allegations are true in Phoenix and elsewhere ... they are completely unacceptable to me, to veterans and the vast majority of VA employees who come to work every day to do their best for those veterans," Shinseki said. "It is important, however, to allow the inspector general to complete his duty."

He said the VA has fired or moved employees, including se-

nior officials, following the allegations and also will spend the next three weeks reviewing its health care system, which has some 1,700 points of entry, and will use those results to make improvements.

When asked why he should not resign, the former Army chief of staff and Vietnam veteran said he had come to the VA to improve the agency and to provide health care to those he had served with over a 35-year military career.

"I intend to continue this mission until I've satisfied that goal or I am told by the commander in chief that my time is served," he said.

Senators were dubious after years of reports on VA problems and the scheduling allegations that exploded in April.

Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., said he was joined with nine directors of the VA during his political career and health care has been deteriorating under Shinseki's tenure.

"The quality of that service is diminishing, and that was not true until recently," Moran said. Senators told the VA leader they wanted action.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., made a special appearance at the hearing Wednesday and said it has been more than a month since the allegations and that the



CUFF OWEN/AP

Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki testifies Thursday on Capitol Hill in Washington before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hearing to examine the state of Veterans Affairs health care.

White House has failed to properly handle them.

He said immediate action should be taken to give veterans more flexibility in choosing where they get treatment and to avoid long waits at VA clinics.

"My fellow veterans can't wait many months that it may take to finish its report," he said.

The nation's largest veterans groups also testified, saying they were angered by the allegations that some were dying while waiting for care, and that better lead-

ership was needed.

Tom Tarantino, chief policy officer for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, said long wait times are not new to the VA but would be solved if "good leaders have the information they need to fix it." Instead, the long delays in scheduling health care for veterans may have been hidden by VA employees who allegedly doctored hospital records, Tarantino said.

"This is indicative of a culture of failed oversight and account-

ability," he said.

Veterans expect action to correct the problems to be "taken in weeks, not months" and urged investigations of the scheduling and health care claims independent of the VA, Tarantino said.

"Veterans need to see the secretary step out in front of this issue and lead," he said. "We want a proactive secretary, not a reactive one."

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Missing Fort Bragg soldier's mother: Suspect led police to grave

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — The mother of a Fort Bragg soldier who disappeared more than two years ago says police were led to her daughter's grave by the suspect now charged with her killing.

Johnna Henson, of St. Cloud, Fla., said Thursday that Fayetteville police called her Wednesday to say they were led to the remains of Pfc. Kelli Bordeaux, 23.

Nicholas Holbert, 27, is charged with kill-

ing Bordeaux. Police said he went to a Fayetteville bar with Bordeaux where she was last seen in April 2012. Holbert is scheduled for a first court appearance Thursday on charges of first-degree murder and first-degree kidnapping.

Henson said Holbert led investigators to Bordeaux's grave in a densely wooded area about 4 miles from the bar where her daughter and Holbert went for drinks and karaoke.

Detectives went Wednesday to an area

near the Interstate 295 corridor on the northern side of Fayetteville after receiving information, city police spokesman Lt. Todd Joyce said.

The remains will be sent to the chief medical examiner's office to confirm the identity.

Fayetteville Police Chief Harold Medlock said at a news conference that Holbert had been a person of interest in the case since Bordeaux disappeared.



Bordeaux



Holbert

MILITARY

Luring current force to 'reform' its own retirement

By TOM PHILPOTT

Current military members and retirees are to be "grandfathered" from any retirement changes that the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission recommends to Congress next February.

Current force members shouldn't let that dampen their interest in the work of the commission. Military recommendations, because any retirement reforms proposed almost certainly will include an "opt-in" feature.

Many currently serving members will get the chance to choose to switch to a more modern, less generous retirement plan. Who would do that?

If past behavior is a reliable guide, thousands will.

Economists use the term "personal discount rates." More simply, it's how the promise of cash-in-hand affects you versus larger future rewards.

It's pretty clear, though, that current members, if they choose, will be able to stay under the "High-3" retirement with its immediate annuities after 20 years of service set to equal 50 percent of average basic pay for their highest three earning years. Why?

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are insisting on it. The Obama administration has made retroactive retirement protection part of its guidance to the commission. The likelihood Congress will buck those promises is slim given the lashes Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., the House and Senate budget committee chairpersons, felt when their budget deal last December included a cap on military retiree cost-of-living adjustments.

Before the ink dried on that deal, Congress voted to replace the COLA cap with alternative budget savings it still might regret: lengthening the impact of sequestration on future defense budgets by another year.

So, to borrow a phrase from recent popular culture: If you like your current plan, you can keep it. But you'll have something new to consider.

Department of Defense pay experts gave the commission two concepts for reforming retirement. They also advised that a lot more money would be saved for taxpayers if, in adopting either

of the ideas, the commission also endorses an "opt in" feature for those in service.

"Steady state" savings from any one of the new retirement concepts if adopted only for new entrants would range from \$1.7 billion to \$3.9 billion annually, officials told the commission.

"However, if currently serving members were permitted to participate... which DoD believes should be an option, savings to the Department and the Treasury would emerge more quickly." The greater the number of members "who opt-in, the faster the full savings of the change would be realized."

Current military retirement is a "defined benefit" that pays an immediate annuity after 20 or more years. The value of the annuity climbs by 2.5 percent of basic pay for each year served. However, only 15 percent of all members who serve stay long enough to qualify.

Both of the new concepts shown to the commission are "hybrid" plans, combining a reduced defined benefit with two new tools. One is a "defined contribution" feature, with the government making regular payments on a member's behalf into a Thrift Savings Plan, similar to a 401(k) account. The contributions would be invested and made portable for members to take with them even if they leave before 20 years. They would be fully vested in these accounts after six years of service.

A third element of the hybrid concept is supplemental pay to give the services greater flexibility to shape force structure and to retain select skills or pay grades. That pay could ease transition to civilian life for careerists no longer needed, or be made "continuation pays" to entice members to served years longer until the defined retirement benefit is within reach.

Being able to pocket benefits sooner can be a powerful inducement to forfeit more valuable benefits. As Defense officials advised the commission:

"Because service members on average value deferred benefits less than the actual cost to the government to provide these benefits, it is possible to generate savings and sustain retention by altering the mix of current and deferred benefits."

Army as a man named Bradley.

The officials were not authorized to speak on the record and discussed the matter on condition of anonymity.

Manning has been diagnosed with gender dysphoria, the sense of being a woman in a man's body. Civilian prisons can provide treatment, but the Defense Department does not, and a transfer would allow her to see if she wants to complete the transformation to being a woman.

Manning was convicted of sending classified documents to anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks. The soldier has asked for hormone therapy and to be able to live as a woman.

From The Associated Press

MILITARY UPDATE

Defense officials have seen that work with the \$30,000 Career Status Bonus offered for more than the last decade to careerists in their 15th year. In return for that extra cash, to pay off credit cards or buy a new car or put a down payment on a home, careerists are still opting back into "Redux" with its reduced annuities and smaller cost-of-living adjustments to retired pay.

Congress conceived the CSB for one purpose: to dampen the cost of repealing that cheaper retirement plan, which Congress had imposed

on any member entering service after July 31, 1986. When the Joint Chiefs complained about the impact on career retention from a cheaper retirement offering, Congress repealed Redux. But it also created the \$30,000 bonus to entice at least some careerists to opt back in.

Though CSB has been frozen at \$30,000 more than a decade, steadily losing purchasing power, it continues to induce about 3 percent of officers and 15 percent of enlisted into a cheaper retirement.

War-time tax breaks on deployment increased its attractiveness.

As of 2012, more than 34,800 enlisted and 925 officers had retired under Redux rather than under the "High-3" plan. Because of that choice, the Defense Department, in setting aside funds to pay fu-

ture retirement benefits, needs to contribute about \$600 million less annually.

Defense officials and outside analysts who shaped the new retirement concepts would bristle at any comparison of their complex plans to the maligned CSB. Their hybrids, they say, address the unfairness of allowing most members to separate with no benefits toward retirement. The hybrids also give force managers greater flexibility to shape a cost-effective force.

But like the CSB, their plans also save a lot of money by moving retirement cash forward where many members will decide it has greater value than in the long run.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA, 20120, email milupdate@aol.com or twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.

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Lawyer: Treat Manning at military facility

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is trying to transfer convicted national security leaker Pvt. Chelsea Manning to a civilian prison where she can get treatment for a gender-identity condition. But her lawyer said Wednesday that a move from a military prison would make Manning choose between the treatment and her safety.

Two Pentagon officials told The Associated Press earlier that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel gave the Army approval last month to try to work out a plan to transfer Manning from Fort Leavenworth, Kan., to a federal prison. Manning entered the

MILITARY

Change: Oil, merchant traffic make Gulf of Guinea security a concern

FROM FRONT PAGE

Many of the nations are working with a U.N. authority to streamline chains of authority among their security forces. Others, such as Gabon, have sought help from the Navy in assessing their maritime forces. And countries along the most vulnerable stretch of coastline are receiving aid from a new European Union project aimed at protecting mariners.

Meanwhile, participation in the annual exercise, called Obangame Express and hosted by the Navy, has continued to rise, with countries such as Ivory Coast and Angola joining this year.

"New countries, countries who formerly didn't even have a platform to bring, are showing up with a ship," said Capt. Nancy Lacore, the exercise director.

There's a good reason behind the new sense of urgency. Maritime crime, long a scourge of the Gulf of Guinea, has escalated in the past year. Ships reported 46 armed robberies in these waters last year — a likely undercount, experts agree — with many of them violent. Attackers took oil, crewmembers' belongings and, more recently, crewmembers, themselves, selling them back to their companies for ransom.

Illegal fishing, meanwhile, is estimated to cost the region's economies \$350 million per year, while drug trafficking through territorial waters is worth as much as \$1.2 billion in illegal goods, according to the EU.

Concerns about disruptions to the high volume of oil and merchant traffic in the region make the region's security a concern for the U.S. and European countries, said Byron Smith, the Navy's director of Africa engagement for U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa in Naples, Italy.

"Those are not only U.S., but global interests," Smith said. "You interrupt the oil flow, then you have an impact on pricing and on the global economy. You impact the free flow of shipping and trade like what's happening on the east coast of Africa; it has an impact."

Though often compared, maritime crime on Africa's western coast differs significantly from the attacks near Somalia that made headlines several years ago. Most incidents in East Africa take place in international waters, making them true pirate attacks. West African attacks typically occur in territorial waters, making them armed robberies and the responsibility of individual states.

The number of governments on the crowded coast of West Africa discourages a single response or shared policy.

Somalia's weak, western-backed government, by contrast, gives international forces a free hand to operate in its waters, resulting in a combined naval flotilla and free pursuit of pirates on land, which has contributed to plummeting numbers of attacks in recent years.

And while commercial ships operate off Somalia with armed security teams, in the Gulf of Guinea, each country provides a security team in its waters. Exchanging security crews each time a ship crosses



PHOTOS BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY/Stars and Stripes

A member of Cameroon's maritime special operations command, the Battalion d'Intervention Rapide, clears a passenger area of the USNS Spearhead during a joint vessel boarding exercise with Nigerian forces in April in the Gulf of Guinea on April 21, 2014.

a maritime border is seen as a waste of time for many ships, said Jon Huggins, director of Oceans Beyond Piracy, a group that monitors piracy in Africa, and results in less trust between the teams and mariners.

"You kind of had a blank slate," Huggins said of Somalia. "On the west coast, you have all these little chunks of territorial waters, which makes everything really kind of difficult."

The response by the U.S. and the EU has been to "build capacity" — the term for improving a country's security forces by training them, donating equipment and reforming their operations — and to encourage the region's states to work together.

The Navy began training in the region in 2007 through its Africa Partnership Station, an annual event in which trainers pull into various ports for exercises. The Pentagon purchased coastal radar equipment and speedboats for local forces in 2008. And in 2010, the Navy began hosting the Obangame Express exercise, which focuses on boarding and maritime tracking and coordination.

Yet tactics are easily undermined by political decisions, as well as corruption or simple inaction. In Nigeria, for example, analysts often see connections between government officials and organized crime

rings, especially those that target oil for theft.

And there is virtually no legal deterrent. According to Oceans Beyond Piracy, no suspect detained for robbery at sea has ever been prosecuted for it.

Many observers hope a code of conduct signed last June in Cameroon by leaders of 25 nations along the Atlantic Coast signals a new commitment. Nations agreed to share information and to create mechanisms for reporting suspicious vessels and incidents, and they pledged to create an anti-piracy coordination center in Cameroon.

Many are now working with the International Maritime Organization, a U.N. agency, on assessments of their capabilities and ideas for reforming their maritime forces. The organization will help implement parts of the agreement, develop standards across the region, provide education and seek international donors to cover expenses.

Other support is coming from the EU project, known as Critical Maritime Routes in the Gulf of Guinea, which will spend 4.5 million euros (about \$6.3 million) training coast guards and developing information-sharing networks in a stretch of nations from Togo south to Gabon.

Gabon, meanwhile, is working bilaterally with the U.S. for an assessment of its own forces and interagency structure.

President Ali Bongo Ondimba made that request directly to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus during the latter's visit to Libreville in August.

Smith, the director of Africa engagement for the nearby Navy command, was recently in Libreville with Vice Adm. Philip S. Davidson, commander of the Navy's fleet for Europe and Africa, for a reception with Ondimba and to provide an update on the assessment, he said.

"At the end of the day, it needs to be a Gabonese product ... we're just trying to make sure we're all on the same page," Smith said.

Back on the Spearhead, the Nigerian-Cameroonian special operations team finished its boarding drill and moved on to the next phase of its exercise — storming a pirate base on a nearby beach. Whether such a team is a viable option for either country remains to be seen. For now, and the next few runs of Obangame Express, it may merely be a tool for training two forces at once. Change happens at its own pace in the Gulf, Huggins said.

"As in everything, it doesn't move as fast as you'd hope."

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MILITARY

Ship-tracking radar helping police Gulf of Guinea waters

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY

Stars and Stripes

IDENAU, Cameroon — Kirsty McLean doesn't need to look out from the shore of this small fishing village to spot one of coastal Africa's lingering problems. She can just log on to her computer.

Using a Web-based mapping tool that plots nearby ships through their VHF (very high frequency) transponders, McLean recently layered another view on top, this one from a satellite searching for ship-size objects in the area. Dozens of new markers suddenly appeared on the screen — a full fleet of ships otherwise unnoticed in territorial waters.

"This is telling you you have a problem," she said.

Armed robbery, illegal fishing and drug trafficking are major issues facing Gulf of Guinea nations such as Cameroon. They are also concerns for the U.S. military, which has funded or financed new coastal radar sites in several countries.

Getting those nations to share that information is the job of McLean, a Navy civilian. Her online mapping tool, which is improving with the increasing availability of satellite imagery and expanded coastal radar, has become more attractive since a recent agreement by Gulf nations to share more of their data.

"You need to be able to see what's going on out there in order to respond to it," said Bryon Smith, director of Africa engagement for U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, where McLean works.

Nine nations share waters along the Gulf's most active stretch, from Ivory Coast to Gabon, creating a patchwork of surveillance systems and a host of technical and political issues with sharing data. Many nations have gaps in their radar coverage.

The dishes also have their limitations as surveillance tools. They are good for line-of-sight detection 20 to 30 miles out — enough to cover territorial waters — but well shy of the 230-mile exclusive economic zone, a region where countries protect their own fish and resource stocks.

Until recently, the lack of a common radar picture left Gulf nations with few resources for sharing information on suspicious vessels, a problem more pronounced among poorer nations unable to afford much coastal radar coverage.

McLean, who works alongside Navy trainers in Africa, was looking for a way to develop that common picture when she spoke to a representative of the Volpe Center, a Department of Transportation initiative that creates transportation-related projects for federal agencies. The representative said he might have something in mind — the center had once worked on a similar concept for U.S. Southern Command.

Programmers pulled that project from the shelf, modified it and in 2010 released SeaVision, a Web-based vessel tracking system that

uses ships' transponders to draw a real-time picture of marine traffic on a common, unclassified interface. Based on Google Maps, the program takes data from the Automatic Identification System, the transponder signal system required of all flagged merchant vessels, and uses it to map ships in real time. Users can track vessels, look at their steaming histories and correspond with other SeaVision users to highlight particular vessels or pass along information.

The AIS data comes via participating countries, who agree to plug their receivers into the program. Satellite AIS receivers ensure vessels can be tracked farther from coastal waters.

The Naval command for Africa began disseminating SeaVision in 2011 through its exercises with African forces, and McLean encouraged countries to continue using the program in their regular surveillance.

"We didn't want to do something that they just used doing exercise because we wanted to build a capability that was consistent — it was there whether we were there or not," she said.

A year after the program's introduction, 20 countries were using SeaVision, McLean said. Administrators can track logs, allowing them to see which users appear comfortable with the program and which may need more training or might be having technical issues. The Navy still provides many of the accounts, she said.

AIS alone can't provide a complete picture of a nation's territorial waters or the exclusive economic zone. Merchant ships can turn the system off, and smaller boats may not even have it. McLean estimates well over half the vessels in the Gulf of Guinea are operating without AIS.

She believes new data feeds will help clear the picture.

The new European Union satellite program Sentinel-1 is expected to provide African nations free satellite images beginning later this year, she said. Although the satellite passes will be irregular — perhaps once every few days — the images will show how many ships are not using their transponders. Coastal radar, which some countries are feeding into the system, can provide similar information. As the U.S. military continues to update radar towers and add new ones, the information should become even better.

Countries should use the new data to enforce AIS requirements, and as a general indicator of where ships are clustering, McLean said.

"It's telling you about a problem," she said. "You can tell the patterns of life. OK, well there was this many ships there last week. Is there this many ships there this week? What fish is in season?"

SeaVision should also receive a boost with last summer's Code of Conduct signed by West and Central African nations in Cameroon. The agreement, which followed a

period of escalating armed robberies in the Gulf, calls for better information sharing among signatories and a new regional information-sharing center in Cameroon.

Here in Idenau, forces from Cameroon and Nigeria recently tested the new agreement with combined exercises aimed at boarding a suspicious vessel. McLean was on hand as a combined maritime operations center first detected the vessel, played by a U.S. ship, tracked it and then guided a boarding team of combined Cameroonian-Nigerian forces toward it.

Such skills can lead to real-world successes, McLean believes. She sees validation in a January interdiction off the coast of Senegal, when maritime officers there acted on a tip to board a Russian-flagged vessel believed to be fishing illegally.



STEVEN BEARDSLEY/Stars and Stripes

A monitor inside a maritime operations center in Cameroon shows the interface for SeaVision, a Web-based maritime monitoring tool.

McLean said the Navy helped Senegalese forces by looking at the ship's history on SeaVision and tracking its movements. The country extracted a \$1.2 million fine from the owners of the ship, the Oleg Nadyonov, which was a repeat offender.

Further improvements to coastal surveillance across Africa, often called maritime domain awareness by the military, will remain a cornerstone of the Navy's work with African nations as long as maritime crime threatens global trade, oil prices and inland sta-

bility, said Smith, the official with U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa. SeaVision is an improving tool, he said — and a reality check on the seriousness of the situation.

He recalled one government minister's reaction when shown a satellite feed on SeaVision.

"We turned this thing on and he's like, 'Well, what are all those ships out there, because we don't see them out here?'"

The response: "That's a good question."

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MILITARY



MATT MILLHAM/Stars and Stripes

Pond Security Service, which provides security at U.S. Army installations in Germany, has posted help wanted signs in nearly all of its vehicles as it struggles to hire personnel amid uncertainty over its contract with the Army. The company is in negotiations for a six-month bridge contract.

Soldiers may take over for civilian guards in Germany

By MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Soldiers may take over security at Army posts in Germany if a contract to keep civilians at the gates isn't signed in the next two weeks.

The Army's contract with Pond Security, which has guarded Army installations in Germany for years, is set to run out May 28, and another firm's bid to take over the job was thrown out in March after protests from rival companies.

The Army is in negotiations with Pond for a six-month bridge contract that would begin May 29 and would give the service time to work out a long-term deal for civilian security guards at its posts in Germany. But if the bridge contract isn't signed in time, U.S. Army Europe is preparing to replace Pond guards with soldiers on May 29 as a stop-gap measure.

USAREUR has begun training soldiers for the job, though the command won't say how many soldiers it's training nor what units they're from.

"As a rule, we do not discuss specific force-protection measures, and it would not be appropriate to discuss how many soldiers would be used, which units would be used, or how long guard shifts would be," USAREUR spokesman Bruce Anderson said Thursday in an emailed statement.

Pond employs some 1,800 guards at Army installations in Germany. Roughly 29,000 sol-

diers are assigned to USAREUR. While most of those are in Germany, the command would have to mobilize more than 6 percent of its soldiers in the country to match what Pond has at the gates.

Anderson said it is reasonable to expect some effect on productivity while soldiers are performing security duties, but that leaders would take steps to "mitigate that effect where possible."

Even if the contract goes through, the Army may still need to provide soldiers to supplement the civilian guard force, according to Pond.

The company lost about 6 percent of its workforce between January and April amid uncertainty over a long-term contract, Chad Geier, the company's chief of staff wrote in an emailed statement. The number of personnel calling in sick has also gone up, he said.

Pond is trying hard to recruit new guards "to stabilize and balance the damages we suffered," Geier said.

A memo updating Pond employees on the bridge contract last week said the losses and sick calls "could result in soldiers working with us at the gates."

According to the memo, Pond and the Army already have negotiated a deal that would keep Pond on the job through at least November 30. Two one-month options could extend their stay through the end of January.

That contract is not yet finalized, however. According to a spokeswoman for the 409th Contracting Support Brigade, they

are still negotiating with Pond.

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Air Force to make accelerated cuts to headquarters staff

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force intends to cut its headquarters staff on a much more aggressive time line than that required by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, according to Air Force officials.

Last summer, Hagel ordered all of the services to reduce their headquarters staff by 20 percent by 2019. Hagel's directive was part of a larger Pentagon effort to save money at a time of budget austerity.

"You're going to see the Air Force do a bit better than 20 percent, a little bit more than 20 percent, and we're going to try to do it in one year, not five years," Deborah Lee James told an editorial board meeting at Gannett Government Media Corp., according to a report by Federal Times, a Gannett publication.

Capt. Erika Yepsen, an Air Force spokeswoman, confirmed the ambitious plans.

"We have five years to do it. But if we can frontload the cuts, then we will be able to reap the benefits of the savings across the five years," she told Stars and Stripes. "That's been our plan all along is to try to achieve the cuts as fast as possible so that we can get the maximum benefit of the savings ...

Like everything in our budget, the sooner you cut it out, the savings sort of multiply over time because then you don't need to keep spending that money [every year]."

James said the shrinking of the headquarters staff will affect active-duty airmen, Air Force civilians and contractor personnel, and the bulk of those cuts will occur in fiscal 2015, according to Federal Times.

To trim the headquarters, James told the editorial board that the service will look to make consolidations among major policy command staffs that manage base support services, such as security, chaplain services, civil engineering and personnel, but the details are still being worked out.

"By next summer, we are looking to be done with this ... because we'll basically be shaped at about the right size," she said, according to Federal Times.

In addition to the headquarters staff cuts, the Air Force intends to slash its overall force structure so that the service can spend more money on new weapon systems and personnel readiness. James has said the Air Force wants to use voluntary retirement measures to reduce the force, and will only use involuntary measures if necessary.

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PACIFIC

Abe pushes for Japan to aid allies in combat

By ERIK SLAVIN
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japan must reinterpret its pacifist constitution to safeguard its citizens and preserve regional peace. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the nation during a televised news conference Thursday night.

Abe said he wants to end the ban on engaging in collective self-defense, following recommendations made in a government committee report released earlier in the day.

Reinterpreting the constitution would allow, for example, a Japanese ship to defend a U.S. Navy ship under attack in international waters, something government officials say is illegal under the current interpretation.

Even if the U.S. ship were carrying evacuated Japanese citizens, the Japan Self-Defense Forces could take no action under the current legal interpretation, Abe said.

"I and the government have the responsibility to protect the lives of (Japanese people)," Abe said. "Is it OK for us to not be able to do anything?"

Ending the ban also would allow Japan to shoot down a missile

fired over the country and toward the United States by North Korea, and would allow Japan to rescue its aid workers abroad, according to the report recommendation.

According to Abe, the reinterpretation can be achieved through Cabinet approval rather than an amendment to the constitution, which would require two-thirds support of parliament and a public referendum.

Those opposed to the move cite Abe's attempt to subvert the Japanese law, as well as the lack of a clear threat requiring the change. Opponents also view the measure as opening the door to a full-fledged military in the future.

"There are misconceptions that Japan will become a country that will fight wars, but there is no way," Abe said. "The course of our country, which has been taken as a pacifist nation, will not change in the future."

So far, Abe has faced resistance, though quantifying the opposition has proven difficult.

The Asahi Shimbun, a Japanese newspaper that opposes Abe's measure in its editorial pages, found that only 29 percent answered yes when asked whether Japan should lift the ban on collective self-defense.

The rival Yomiuri Shimbun,

which is viewed as more conservative, found nearly the opposite with slightly different wording. Sixty-three percent said they

supported defending an ally, assuming it was "authorized with the minimum force necessary." Another 8 percent favored the measure unconditionally.

Abe also must convince skeptical leaders of New Komeito, the minority partner in his government, that the proposed changes won't lead Japan on an unnecessary path to war.

Opponents to Abe's plans aren't necessarily hostile to the U.S.-Japan security alliance.

Kyoji Yanagisawa, chief director of International Geopolitics Institute, a private think tank, said he doesn't oppose U.S.-Japan cooperation, but believes that intelligence-sharing and logistics requests are sufficient.

Yanagisawa added that ending the collective self-defense ban



Abe

could put Japan into a position in which it must choose between its own interests and rejecting a U.S. request for aid.

Such a request "could shatter the U.S. alliance," Yanagisawa said.

Officials favoring collective self-defense say that is unlikely. Japan and the U.S. have disagreed in recent decades without disastrous consequences, though not on matters of direct combat.

Meanwhile, Abe's supporters contend that North Korea's continued development of nuclear weapons, coupled with China's increasingly assertive use of force in Asia-Pacific-region waters, show an alignment of interests.

"A challenge against the status quo by force is something we have to avoid," Shinichi Kitaoka, deputy chairman of the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security, told Stars and Stripes in April. "We cannot be indifferent in the situation in the South China Sea. Therefore, we must strengthen our cooperation."

If the ban on collective self-defense ends, its exercise will come with conditions.

The panel's recommendations include that a request for aid come from a close ally under at-

tack, and that the attack would represent a grave threat to Japan's security.

The prime minister and the national security council then would request the use of force and would gain Diet approval.

Japan would "use force to the minimum extent necessary," according to the report.

In emergency situations, the panel recommended giving the council power to take action and to gain Diet approval afterward, a measure that could draw some opposition.

Japan also would be required to gain approval from any other nation where forces must transit on the way to a conflict, according to the recommendations.

Abe will try to gain approval by the end of the Diet session June 22, though some officials have stated that it may take longer. If approved in June, it likely would take until at least the end of this year to amend the self-defense law and others, which are legal precursors to collective self-defense.

Japan's constitution has never been amended in its 67 years of existence.

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NATION

9/11 museum dedicated at ground zero

BY JONATHAN LEMIRE
AND JENNIFER PELTZ
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — President Barack Obama praised the new Sept. 11 museum on Thursday as “a sacred place of healing and of hope” that captures both the story and the spirit of heroism and helpfulness that followed the attacks.

“It’s an honor to join in your memories, to recall and to reflect, but above all to reaffirm the true spirit of 9/11 — love, compassion, sacrifice — and to enshrine it forever in the heart of our nation,” he told an audience of victims’ relatives, survivors, rescuers and recovery workers at the ground zero museum’s dedication ceremony.

“Like the great wall and bedrock that embrace us today, nothing can ever break us. Nothing can change who we are as Americans.”

After viewing some of the exhibits, including a mangled fire truck and a memorial wall with photos of victims, the president touched on some of the many stories of courage amid the chaos: the passengers who stormed a hijacked plane’s cockpit over a Pennsylvania field and first responders who rushed into the burning twin towers. He also honored military members “who have served with honor in more than a decade of war.”

He focused especially on the story of Welles Crowther, a 24-year-old World Trade Center worker and former volunteer firefighter who became known as “the man in the red bandanna” after he led other workers to safety from the trade center’s stricken south tower. He died in the tower’s collapse.

One of the red bandannas he made a habit of carrying is in the museum, and Crowther’s mother, Alison, told the audience she hoped it would remind visitors “how people helped each other that day, and that they will be inspired to do the same in ways both big and small. This is the true legacy of Sept. 11.”

By her side was Ling Young, one of the people Welles Crowther



President Barack Obama speaks at the National September 11 Memorial Museum on Thursday in New York.

PHOTOS BY CAROLYN KASTER/AP

‘Nothing can ever break us’



President Barack Obama and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg tour the destroyed Ladder 3 truck.



A twisted piece of steel from the World Trade Center sits in Foundation Hall before the dedication ceremony at the museum.



President Barack Obama, first lady Michelle Obama, Michael Bloomberg, Hillary Clinton and Bill Clinton tour the Memorial Hall.

rescued.

“It was very hard for me to come here today,” but she wanted to thank his parents, she said.

Before the ceremony, Obama walked quietly through an expansive hall with former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. First lady Michelle Obama, former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton following behind them.

The museum, which commemorates the 2001 terrorist attack, as well as the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, opens to the public on May 21.

Reflections from dignitaries — including New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, current New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and former Mayor Rudy Giuliani — were interspersed with the voices of everyday people caught up in Sept. 11.

Retired Fire Department Lt. Mickey Cross described being trapped for hours in the wreckage of the north tower — and then joining the recovery effort after being rescued. “There was a real sense of caring for each other,” he said.

Ada Dolch, a school principal

whose sister died at the trade center, recalled turning her grief into inspiration to open a school in Afghanistan. “What a kick in the head to Osama bin Laden!” she said.

Kayla Bergeron remembered walking down 68 flights of stairs in the north tower, amid confusion and fear that there was no way out.

Her final steps to safety were on an outdoor stairway, now in the museum as the “survivors’ stairs.”

“Today, when I think about those stairs, what they represent to me is resiliency,” she said.

By turns chilling and heart-breaking, the ground zero museum leads people on an unsettling journey through the terrorist attacks, with forays into their lead up and legacy.

There are scenes of horror, including videos of the skyscrapers collapsing and people falling from them. But there also are symbols of heroism, ranging from damaged fire trucks to the wristwatch of one of the airline passengers who confronted the hijackers.

The museum and memorial plaza above, which opened in 2011, were built for \$700 million in donations and tax dollars.

Climate warnings ignored with US elections looming

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Congress, ignoring dire new warnings about climate change, continues to shy away from legislation that might mitigate the effects of global warming, leaving President Barack Obama with limited tools to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are partly responsible for melting glaciers and rising sea levels.

The United States is the second-largest producer of carbon dioxide, the heat-trapping gas that is a byproduct of burning

coal, oil and natural gas. China is in first place. Curbing those emissions and switching to energy sources such as wind and solar will be expensive and harm the economy in some U.S. states, especially those that depend heavily on coal mining and oil extraction.

Given that reality and upcoming congressional elections in November, lawmakers — including some Democrats — are more reluctant than ever to tackle legislation that would put limits on emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases.

Republicans have a good chance at taking the majority in the Senate, and Democrats are fighting most of their toughest races this year in conservative-leaning states that rely heavily on the energy industry, including Louisiana, Arkansas, Kentucky, West Virginia, Alaska and Montana.

Conservative groups already have spent millions of dollars accusing Democrats in those states of supporting energy policies that would impede local jobs and economic development.

Next month, the Obama administration is set to release new regulations on emis-

sions from coal-burning power plants. Opponents of the move claim the president and Democrats have declared war on coal.

But it is not just politics. Many Republicans say they do not believe the science that shows man-made climate change as a major threat to civilization.

“I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it,” Sen. Marco Rubio said over the weekend. He is a likely candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016.

NATION

Mo. passes law on 3-day wait period on abortions

By JORDAN SHAPIRO
The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Missouri's Republican-controlled Legislature gave final approval Wednesday to legislation requiring a woman to wait three days after first seeing a doctor before having an abortion. Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon has not said whether he will sign or veto it.

The measure would triple Missouri's current 24-hour waiting period and put the state in line with Utah and South Dakota as the only states to mandate a 72-hour time frame. Missouri currently has only one clinic performing elective abortions.

The House voted 111-39 in favor of the measure Wednesday, sending it to Nixon, who has previously allowed other abortion restrictions to become law without his signature. That included a measure last year that requires doctors to be in the room for the initial dose of a drug used in medical abortions.

Nixon said Tuesday that he would review the extended waiting period and act in a manner consistent with his other actions on abortion legislation.

'Life is precious. I want to make sure the unborn child has a chance to survive.'

Sen. David Sater
a Republican pharmacist

Senators passed the waiting period measure earlier this week after Democrats agreed to stop filibustering the bill in exchange for Republicans dropping other measures the Democrats

opposed, related to union fees and photo identification requirements for elections.

Under both current law and the new legislation, Missouri's abortion waiting period doesn't apply in instances deemed by a doctor to be a medical emergency. But women do have to wait in cases of rape and incest.

Supporters argue that women need more time to digest information received by a doctor. In addition to the waiting period, Missouri's current abortion law requires doctors to provide women with a variety of written information about the procedure, and they must be given the opportunity to hear the fetus' heartbeat on an ultrasound.

"Life is precious. I want to make sure the unborn child has a chance to survive," Sen. David Sater, a Republican pharmacist from rural southwest Missouri, said during debate on the legislation he sponsored.

Opponents said the longer waiting period would push women further into pregnancy before an abortion, which can increase risk.



HAYNE PALMOUR IV, U-T SAN DIEGO/AP

Inmates from Oak Glen Fire Camp in Riverside retreat to higher ground as the flames start to move close while they work to control the fire near Oriole Court in Carlsbad, Calif., on Wednesday.

Crews making gains on worst of San Diego fires

By ELLIOTT SPAGAT
AND JULIE WATSON
The Associated Press

SAN MARCOS, Calif. — Firefighters gained ground overnight on a string of major San Diego area wildfires — except for one in the city of San Marcos where the 700-acre blaze burned out of control Thursday as another scorching day dawned.

Nine fires in all were burning an area of more than 14 square miles amid a heat wave and dry conditions, said San Diego County officials, who warned also of poor air quality with black and gray smoke wafting over the region. The wildfires drove tens of thousands from their homes and shut down schools and amusement parks, including Legoland.

Firefighters contended with temperatures approaching 100 degrees and gusty winds as they tried to contain flames fueled by brush and trees left brittle by drought.

Officials said a Carlsbad area blaze was 60 percent contained and had burned 400 acres. The wildfire destroyed an 18-unit condominium complex and four residences, Carlsbad Mayor Matt Hall said.

Some evacuation orders were being lifted in Carlsbad but a



A Carlsbad, Calif., police officer turns traffic away as flames leap behind him on Wednesday.

major power outage and hotspots were still a concern.

Efforts were focusing on San Marcos, a university city where hundreds of new evacuation orders were issued on Thursday. More than 20,000 evacuation notices were sent to residents Wednesday and a California State University campus with nearly 10,000 students in the middle of final exams was shut down at least through Thursday. San Diego County officials said that the blaze had destroyed three homes.

The blaze in the coastal city of Carlsbad, about 30 miles north of

San Diego, was the most destructive of the fires so far.

Other areas in the county also flared up, though most calmed quickly, including two fires in the far north of the county near Camp Pendleton that together burned nearly 11 square miles and prompted evacuations that lasted just a few hours.

Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency for San Diego County, which would free up special resources and funding for the firefight, and state fire officials were creating a central command center for the blazes.

W.Va. teen beats state delegate in GOP primary

By REID WILSON
The Washington Post

Saira Blair will graduate from a West Virginia high school later this month. She posts photos of her smoothie habit on Instagram, volunteers at the Martinsburg veterans hospital and helps raise money for the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

She will not be eligible to vote until July.

But on Tuesday, she beat a sitting state delegate who was seeking a third term in office.

With all 13 precincts in her Martinsburg area district reporting, Blair beat state Del. Larry Kump, a Republican, with 872 votes to his 728.

Blair campaigned on an anti-abortion, pro-Second Amendment platform, offering her cellphone number to constituents and pledging not to be negative. She spent about \$4,800 on her campaign, state finance records show. (Kump, a former lobbyist, only spent \$1,800 on his re-election bid.)

"I think I'm fully capable of doing the job, and I don't think it's rocket science by any means — not if you just listen to the people," Blair told the Martinsburg Herald-Mail this week.

She's no stranger to politics, either: Blair's father, Craig, is a West Virginia state senator. And despite being ineligible to vote for herself in the primary, she will be 18 in two months, meaning she'll be old enough to vote in November, and to serve when the legislature reconvenes next year.

Blair will face Democratic nominee Layne Diehl in November, and she's the favorite: In the 2012 presidential election, Republican Mitt Romney took nearly two-thirds of the vote in her district, according to a breakdown by the liberal blog DailyKos.

No new gay marriage licenses in Ark., for now

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Gay couples in Arkansas will not be able to get wedding licenses, even though the state Supreme Court upheld a ruling that struck down the ban on same-sex marriage, because a separate law that prevents clerks issuing the licenses to same-sex couples is still on the books.

An unsigned order, the justices refused to put the ruling by Pulaski County Circuit Judge Chris Piazza on hold. Even though they rejected the state's request to suspend the ruling, their order will still prevent any other same-sex couples from getting marriage licenses in Arkansas, at least for now.

From The Associated Press



Blair

NATION

Segregation in schools making comeback 60 years after Brown

By JESSE J. HOLLAND
AND KIMBERLY HEFLING
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Segregation is making a comeback in U.S. schools.

Progress toward integrated classrooms largely has been rolled back since the Supreme Court issued its landmark *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* decision 60 years ago, according to a report released Thursday by the Civil Rights Project at UCLA. Blacks are now seeing more school segregation than they have in decades, and more than half of Latino students are now attending schools that are majority Latino.

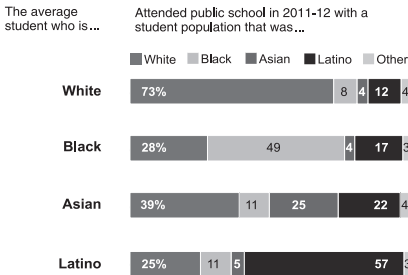
In New York, California and Texas, more than half of Latino students are enrolled in schools that are 90 percent minority or more, the report found. In New York, Illinois, Maryland and Michigan, more than half of black students attend schools where 90 percent or more are minority.

Project co-director Gary Orfield, author of the "Brown at 60" report, said the changes are troubling because they show some minority students receive poorer educations than white students and Asian students, who tend to be in middle-class schools. The report urged, among other things, deeper research into housing segregation, which is a "fundamental cause of separate-and-unequal schooling."

Although segregation is more prevalent in central cities of the largest metropolitan areas, it's also in the suburbs. "Neighborhood schools, when we go back

Students, schools and race

Sixty years after U.S. courts ordered schools desegregated, nonwhite students are still more likely to attend public schools with predominantly minority student bodies.



NOTE: Numbers are rounded. "Other" includes Native American and multiracial students.

SOURCES: UCLA analysis of Education Department data

AP

to them, as we have, produce middle-class schools for whites and Asians and segregated, high-poverty schools for blacks and Latinos," Orfield said.

Housing discrimination — stopping or discouraging minorities from moving to majority-white areas — also plays a role in school segregation and "that's been a harder nut to crack," said Sherri Lynn Ifill, president of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, which argued the *Brown* case in front of the Supreme Court.

School performance can be entwined with poverty, too.

"These are the schools that tend to have fewer resources, tend to have teachers with less experience, tend to have people who are teaching outside their area of specialty, and it also denies the opportunities, the contacts and the networking that occur when you're with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds," said Dennis Parker, director of the American Civil Liberties Union Racial Justice Program.

Seattle aims to lead US to minimum wage of \$15

By MANUEL VALDES
The Associated Press

SEATTLE — They've crowded into stuffy rallies at a Seattle union hall, protested in front of fast-food restaurants, marched down city streets and implored city leaders to demand an immediate \$15-an-hour minimum wage increase for all employees.

"We're not patient!" a man shouted at a union hall rally, and the crowd cheered.

While the Seattle mayor is proposing to raise the wage to \$15 in the coming years — the highest level in the nation — some activists say that's too slow and are threatening to take the issue to voters with a ballot measure that would force a raise sooner.

Accounting for inflation, "even in 10 years' time, workers still won't be at \$15," said Kshama Sawant, the socialist City Council



ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

Seattle City Council member Kshama Sawant, right, waits as Stephanie Sucasaca interprets Sawant's remarks into Spanish at a rally May 1 in Seattle.

member and a leader of the group 15 Now.

As the plan is being debated by the council, businesses are sounding the alarm that raising the wage too quickly could hurt their revenue and force them to either hire fewer workers or let go more of their employees.

Popular restaurateurs have emphatically argued for counting tips in total compensation.

Minority chambers of commerce have banded together to argue that a quick increase to \$15 would kill their family-run

businesses. Who is going to hire immigrants learning English for \$15 per hour? they ask.

OneSeattle, a group made up of small and medium-size employers with the backing of large business organizations like the Washington Restaurant Association, says they support a wage increase, but with some key caveats.

They want a phase-in and a temporary training wage. They also want health care, commissions, tips and bonuses to be counted in total wages.

Common Core math stirs ire among parents

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM
The Associated Press

An Iowa woman jokingly calls it "Satan's handiwork." A California mom says she's broken down in tears. A Pennsylvania parent says it "makes my blood boil."

What could be so horrible? Grade-school math.

As schools around the U.S. implement national Common Core learning standards, parents trying to help their kids with math homework say that adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing have become as complicated as calculus.

They're stumped by unfamiliar terms like "rectangular array" and "area model." They wrestle with division that requires the use of squares, slashes and dots. They rage over impenetrable word problems.

Stacey Jacobson-Francis, 41, of Berkeley, Calif., said her daughter's homework requires her to know four different ways to add.

"That is way too much to ask of a first-grader," she said. "She can't remember them all, and I don't know them all, so we just do the best that we can."

Simple arithmetic isn't so simple anymore, leading to plenty of angst at home.

Even celebrities aren't immune: The comedian Louis C.K. took to Twitter recently to vent about his kids' convoluted homework, writing that his daughters went from loving math to crying about it.

Adopted by 44 states, the Common Core is a set of English and math standards that spell out what students should know and when. The standards for elementary math emphasize that kids should not only be able to solve arithmetic problems using the tried-and-true methods their parents learned, but understand how numbers relate to each other.

"Part of what we are trying to figure children is to become problem solvers and thinkers," said Diane Briars, president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. "We want students to understand what they're doing, not just get the right answer."

That's a radically different approach than many parents are accustomed to.

Jennie Barnds, 40, of Davenport, Iowa, was puzzled by her fourth-grade daughter's long-division homework, a foreign amalgam of boxes, slashes and dots with nary a quotient or dividend in sight.

"If we are sitting there for 20 minutes trying to do a simple

Unfamiliar terms in math homework

Under Common Core, parents are likely to see some unfamiliar terms on their children's elementary-school math homework. Here are some examples drawn from New York state's math curriculum:

■ **Grade 2 addition.**

Solve using your place value chart and number disks, composing a 10 when necessary: 53+19

■ **Grade 2 subtraction.**

Craig checked out 28 books at the library. He read and returned some books. He still has 19 books checked out. How many books did Craig return? Draw a tape diagram or number bond to solve.

■ **Grade 4 multiplication.**

Represent the following expressions with disks, regrouping as necessary, writing a matching equation, and recording the partial products vertically: 3x24.

■ **Grade 4 word problem.**

Cindy says she found a shortcut for doing multiplication problems. When she multiplies 3x24, she says, "3x4 is 12 ones, or 1 ten and 2 ones. Then there's just 2 tens left in 24, so add it up and you get 3 tens and 2 ones." Do you think Cindy's shortcut works? Explain your thinking in words and justify your response using a model or partial products.

From The Associated Press

problem, how is an 8-, 9-, 10-year-old supposed to figure it out?" she said.

"It's incredibly frustrating for the student and the parent."

Whether Common Core itself is responsible for the homework headaches is a contentious issue.

Some experts say Common Core promotes reform math, a teaching method that gained currency in the 1990s. Derided as "fuzzy" math by critics, reform math says kids should explore and understand concepts like place value before they become fluent in the standard way of doing arithmetic.

Critics say it fails to stress basic computational skills, leaving students unprepared for higher math.

WORLD



DEPO PHOTOS/AP

A person identified by Turkish media as Yusuf Yerkel, an adviser to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, kicks a protester held by special forces police members during Erdogan's visit to Soma, Turkey, on Wednesday after a mining accident.

Turkey mine blast toll rises

The Associated Press

SOMA, Turkey — Women sang improvised ballads about the departed over freshly dug graves Thursday, even as backhoes carved row upon row of graves into the dirt and hearses lined up outside the cemetery with more victims of Turkey's mining disaster.

Rescue teams recovered another eight victims, raising the death toll to 282, with some 142 people still unaccounted for, according to government figures. The disaster Tuesday has set off protests around Turkey and thrown Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's presidential ambitions off stride. Blackening his reputation further, one of Erdogan's aides was accused of kicking a protester.

At a graveyard in the western town of Soma, where coal mining

has been the main industry for decades, women wailed loudly in an improvised display of mourning. They swayed and sang songs about their relatives as the bodies were taken from coffins and lowered into their graves. Pictures of the lost relatives were pinned onto their clothing.

"The love of my life is gone," some sang, chanting the names of dead miners.

No miner has been brought out alive since dawn Wednesday from the Soma coal mine where the explosion and fire took place. Many mourners said they spent their whole lives fearing something like this.

"The wives of the miners kiss their husbands in the morning," said Gulizir Donmez, 45, the daughter and wife of a miner and neighbor of one of the victims.

"When they come back, even if they are five minutes late, everyone starts calling. You never know what is going to happen."

Energy Minister Taner Yildiz on Thursday announced that a fire inside the mine was dying down, offering hope that rescuers would soon be able to speed up their search for those missing.

Erdogan was not welcome during his visit to the area Wednesday. He was forced to take refuge at a supermarket after angry crowds called him a murderer and a thief, in a reference to alleged corruption, and clashed with police.

Turkish newspapers on Thursday printed photographs they said were of an Erdogan aide kicking a protester who was on the ground and being held by special forces police. The papers identified the aide as Yusuf Yerkel.

2 insurgent bases are destroyed by Ukrainian army

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian army destroyed two military bases of pro-Russian insurgents in overnight operations, the country's acting president said Thursday, as the government returned to the offensive a day after the start of European-brokered talks which have yet to draw in the warring sides.

Acting President Oleksandr Turchynov told lawmakers that government forces attacked an insurgent base in the city of Slovyansk and another one in nearby Kramatorsk, about 95 miles west of the Russian border.

Ukraine's defense ministry said there were no casualties, while the army took three insurgents captive, including one who was armed with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

Associated Press journalists in Slovyansk heard bursts of automatic gunfire overnight, but details of Turchynov's statement couldn't be independently confirmed. The situation was quiet during the day Thursday, and there has been no comment from the insurgents to the claims made by Turchynov.

Turchynov didn't describe the insurgents' bases or give any further details. Both government troops and insurgents have checkpoints around Slovyansk and Kramatorsk.

Some previous Ukrainian claims of successful operations have proved to be exaggerated.

Insurgents, who have seized government buildings across eastern Ukraine and fought the Ukrainian military, declared two eastern regions independent following Sunday's referendum, which was dismissed as a sham by the Ukrainian government

and the West.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a trans-Atlantic security group, put forward a "road map" calling for national dialogue as a first step toward resolving the escalating tensions. The first round of talks in Kiev produced no visible result as the government has confirmed its refusal to sit down with representatives of the insurgents.

In the east of Ukraine, insurgents said they hadn't been invited to the Kiev round table and said that talks should be held in Donetsk. One of the leaders of the insurgency, Denis Pushilin, said it should focus on prisoners exchange and the pullout of the government forces, whom he called "occupation troops."

The next session of the talks is expected on Saturday, but the government hasn't made any specific commitments.

In Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich, what he called a "stubborn reluctance of the authorities in Kiev to launch a real process of national reconciliation."

Meanwhile, Russia has ratcheted up pressure on Ukraine, with President Vladimir Putin saying in a letter released Thursday that it will deliver gas to its struggling neighbor next month only if it pays in advance.

Putin first warned of the move in April in a letter to European leaders whose nations are customers of Russian state-controlled Gazprom natural gas giant. He said that Moscow would switch to pre-paid deliveries if Ukraine, which serves as a major conduit for Russian gas supplies to Europe, failed to start settling its mounting gas debt.

Chinese workers attacked

The Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — A 1,000-strong mob stormed a Taiwanese steel mill in Vietnam and hunted down Chinese workers, killing one, attacking scores more and then setting the complex alight, Taiwanese and Vietnamese authorities said Thursday, further inflaming tensions between Hanoi and Beijing as they square off against each other in the disputed South China Sea.

It was the first deadly incident in a wave of anti-China protests triggered by Beijing's deployment of an oil rig in the long-disputed seas on May 1. Vietnam is angrily demanding that China remove the rig and has sent ships to confront it and a flotilla of escort ships.

Taiwanese companies, many

of which employ Chinese nationals, have borne the brunt of the protests and violence, which is posing a challenge to the authoritarian government, which prides itself on maintaining peace and security. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung said peaceful protests over the last few days were "legitimate," but that anyone involved in violence should be punished severely.

Nervous Chinese expatriates were fleeing by land and air. Cambodian immigration police said 600 Chinese crossed into Cambodia over the land border in southern Vietnam on Wednesday and that others were arriving Thursday.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China was "greatly shocked and concerned."

US: Freeing captive girls top priority

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Freeing 276 Nigerian girls from the terrorist group Boko Haram is now one of the U.S. government's top priorities, U.S. officials declared Thursday, issuing warnings about the militant group's expanding reach and growing capacity for more sophisticated and deadlier terrorist attacks.

At the same time, the officials lamented limitations on U.S. cooperation and intelligence sharing with the Nigerian military due to human rights concerns and legal restrictions. They also expressed concern about the Nigerian government's commitment and army's ability to combat the group.

Robert Jackson, a State Department specialist on Africa, said that Boko Haram "has no re-

gard for human life." He said the Obama administration was boosting Nigeria's intelligence and law enforcement capabilities, while seeking global sanctions on Boko Haram at the United Nations.

The girls' abduction last month from a school in the remote Nigerian town of Chibok triggered global outrage. The extremist Islamist militants have threatened to sell the girls into slavery.

"Resolving this crisis is now one of the highest priorities of the U.S. government," Jackson told a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee. Boko Haram, he said, "has been killing innocent people in Nigeria for some time, and the attack at Chibok is part of that long, terrible trend." The group has killed more than 1,000 people this year in attacks on schools, churches and mosques and now

poses a growing threat to neighboring Cameroon, he added.

Testifying alongside Jackson, Alice Friend, the Defense Department's principal director for Africa, said Boko Haram was becoming more dangerous by the day.

The group has proven it is "capable of directly and successfully engaging Nigeria's armed forces," she said.

"In general, Nigeria has failed to mount an effective campaign against Boko Haram," Friend told the panel.

Pressed by Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., Friend acknowledged that U.S. assistance was being hampered by American restrictions on providing any military aid or training to security units even suspected of gross human rights violations.

FAITH



AARON THOMAS, THE (MASON CITY, IOWA) GLOBE GAZETTE/AP

Pastor Jani Dahlin, of Praise Community Church in Mason City, Iowa, ministers to female inmates at the Cerro Gordo County Jail in April. Dahlin's jail ministry started when she went to the jail to visit a former parishioner.

Pastor helps female inmates feed faith

Bible study started with a visit to a former parishioner, has blossomed into a weekly event

By PEGGY SENZARINO
The (Mason City, Iowa)
Globe Gazette

MASON CITY, Iowa — Pastor Jani Dahlin, of Praise Community Church in Mason City, spends an hour each week bringing spiritual healing and hope for the future to female inmates at the Cerro Gordo County Jail.

Dahlin's jail ministry started in late August when she went to the jail to visit a former parishioner. When she arrived, the inmate said another woman incarcerated at the jail also wanted a visit.

She visited with both women individually, giving them each a Bible.

"They were very happy to get it. They were already doing Bible study together," Dahlin told the Globe Gazette.

She expected to go back in about a month because her initial contact was scheduled to be in jail for six months.

"But she sent me a letter right away thanking me. She gave me a list of four other ladies who wanted me to come visit," Dahlin said.

"I just thought, I guess I'm going back sooner than I thought. And so I went back and saw them

'Even though they've gotten into a hard place in life, there is hope for them and so it's just exciting to be able to come in and be a voice for hope in their lives.'

Pastor Jani Dahlin
Praise Community Church

again and saw a couple other ladies and every time I'd see someone I'd leave a Bible for them."

Her visits continued that way until December when her initial contact was due to be released. She decided to ask Jail Administrator Shad Stoeffler if she could hold an hourlong Bible study for women every Monday afternoon. He agreed.

The Bible study is different than her individual meetings with the inmates. Previously, she talked with the women on the telephone behind a glass partition. Now she is in the same room with them.

The number of women attending the Bible study fluctuates from five or six to a high of 11.

"I felt like it was a great opportunity to bring encouragement and just affirm their value as people," Dahlin said.

"Even though they've gotten into a hard place in life, there is hope for them and so it's just exciting to be able to come in and be a voice for hope in their lives. They really soak it up."

"It's been a really neat opportunity. I was definitely kind of intimidated when Shad first said I could go every week and be in this room with a bunch of ladies I don't know, who don't know me."

Stoeffler said the program is important in helping the inmates keep positive thoughts. He also said the role of the program in stemming bad behavior in the jail shouldn't be underestimated.

Each session starts with the women introducing themselves and talking about how they are doing. Dahlin introduces the week's Bible passage. The women take turns reading passages.

The program ends with ques-

tions, comments, prayer requests and finally, prayer. "It goes pretty fast," Dahlin said.

What does the program mean to her?

"For me, the word that comes to my mind is privilege," Dahlin said. "To me it's a privilege to be able to go and speak into the lives of people that are at a very difficult place. I try to imagine what it would be like to be in their shoes. I just can't really imagine at least from my perspective."

"Unfortunately for them, it's not hard for them to imagine and it's one of the reasons they're there."

"They just have not known the potential of what their life could be. It makes them vulnerable to fall into things that are destructive for their life."

Dahlin said the jail setting strips away all of the distractions of the outside world and it enables the inmates to see the things that are really important.

"I see myself as being able to help them to kind of get focused on those important things, the value of their life and the potential of it," she said. "Of course, to me, God is the one that gives that value and so just trying to help them to focus and to see that and to know that even they are in low position in this world the sky is

the limit.

"God can give them the strength and the value and the love and the things that they need in order to move toward that potential, and so that's why I say it just feels like a privilege to me to be able to speak that encouragement in their life," Dahlin said. "It is very rewarding."

She said the women seem open to the teachings.

"When you get to the bottom or close to it, you're ready to grab onto something that can really help you to get back out of that pit," she said. "That's what I would hope it would accomplish."

Dahlin and her husband, Pastor Jeff Dahlin, are the parents of six children ranging in age from 6 to 18. She is pastor of discipleship for children and adults. Jeff Dahlin is lead pastor at Praise Community Church.

Dahlin said she was heartened by a letter she received from one member of the Bible study group.

"For some of us out here you are all we really have who gives us any kind of support or shows faith in us, that we're not just worthless criminals," the letter reads. "We are people who have made some mistakes in our life that we can bounce back from."



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FACES



CHARLES SYKES, INVISION/AP

Dolly Parton performed on the "Today" show on Tuesday. She released her first album in three years, "Blue Smoke," in the U.S. this week. It features duets with Willie Nelson and Kenny Rogers and covers of Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice" and Bon Jovi's "Lay Your Hands on Me." She is also pop star Miley Cyrus' godmother.

Parton talks album, Miley Cyrus and remaining true to yourself

BY CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

As Miley Cyrus' godmother, Dolly Parton has spent a lot of time answering reporters' questions about the Hannah Montana actress turned pop ingenue as Parton promotes her new album, "Blue Smoke," in the U.S. out this week.

Though she says she worries about Cyrus as if she were her own child, she supports the sometimes shocking decisions her goddaughter has made as she moved from child star to a confident — and complicated — young woman.

"I'll never say anything bad about Miley 'cause I know she's smart," Parton said. "And I know she's talented. And I know she's had to go to drastic measures to try to make her point: 'Leave me alone. I am not Hannah Montana anymore. I want to grow up.'"

The 68-year-old Country Music Hall of Fame member compared Cyrus critics to those who chided her when she first came on the scene — a buxom teen

'[T]his is my look. I mean, I like a lot of makeup. I like a lot of hair. I like flashy clothes. I like to show it off. But that's just who I am.'

with a confident sense of self and style that drew frowns and tsks-tsks from those who expected her to be demure and chaste.

"But I never let that stop me from being the business girl that I was," Parton said. "I knew my songs were good even if I had been ugly as sin. I felt like I could sing, even if I had been ugly as sin. So I thought, 'Well, I would have probably chose to look this way even if I had been a waitress.' I mean, this is my look. I mean, I like a lot

of makeup. I like a lot of hair. I like flashy clothes. I like to show it off. But that's just who I am."

Though she never changed her image, Parton managed to get folks to pay attention to her music and skills as an entertainer and businesswoman, and not so much to her wardrobe and makeup.

"Blue Smoke" is her first album in three years. She wrote many of the songs on the album, sings duets with Willie Nelson and Kenny Rogers and takes a trip into unlikely territory on covers of Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice" and Bon Jovi's "Lay Your Hands on Me," which she gives a Sunday-morning flavor: She recently announced hundreds of millions of dollars in business investments and will tour the world this year.

"And I am not finished yet," Parton said. "I still have a lot of other business things I want to do. I just think it's the love of it. I just really try to keep my creative hat on. I just love to write, I love to think. I love the business end of things. I love to work. Energy begets energy. And dreams beget dreams. So I just keep on keeping on."

Sitcom to end after 12 seasons

From wire reports

"Two and a Half Men," once the highest-rated TV comedy in the U.S., is ending its run with a 12th and final season.

The show, which starred Charlie Sheen until he was replaced by Ashton Kutcher in 2011, will retain its slot on Thursdays at 9 p.m. EDT, the network said Wednesday in a statement.

Series creator Chuck Lorre "will be creating a season-long event to send it off,"

said Nina Tassler, head of entertainment for the network.

Tassler said she does not know whether bringing Sheen's character back from the dead will be part of the sendoff.

Though "Two and a Half Men," which also stars Jon Cryer, continued to appear regularly among the top 25 programs in the ratings after the transition to Kutcher, it had been surpassed by CBS hits like "The Big Bang Theory."

Woman: Bieber stole phone

Los Angeles police detectives are investigating allegations from a woman who claims Justin Bieber took her cell phone at a miniature golf course.

"He has been accused of attempted robbery," Officer Rosario Herrera told the Los Angeles Times, adding detectives have not talked to the pop star yet.

The woman said Bieber allegedly grabbed the phone because he thought she was taking pictures of him at the San Fernando Valley course, the police official said. Bieber was not accused of keeping the phone. The woman told officers the incident took place Monday around 10:30 p.m. in the Los Angeles Police Department's Devonshire Division.

CW adds 2 new shows

The CW television network is bringing the comic book hero "The Flash" onto its fantasy-laden schedule, along with a soap opera about a virgin who is artificially inseminated by accident.

The series about a superhero who moves about with lightning speed will air Tuesday nights, one of only two new series the CW is introducing in the fall.

The other, "Jane the Virgin," is a telenovela adaptation about a young woman obsessed with telenovelas whose life takes on some theatrical complications. Through a doctor's mistake, she's inseminated with a specimen from a playboy donor.

CW President Mark Pedowitz also said Thursday he's trying again to make a "Supernatural" spinoff.

Other news

■ The hotel where someone recorded security video appearing to show Beyoncé's sister, Solange Knowles, attacking Jay Z inside an elevator said Wednesday it had identified and fired the person. The Standard Hotel said the person had been terminated for "breaching the security policies of the hotel and recording the confidential CCTV video."

■ The Oprah Winfrey Network says it plans to produce a documentary series following the life of Michael Sam, the first openly gay player drafted by an NFL team. The series will take an up-close look at the man recently drafted by the St. Louis Rams in a groundbreaking moment in professional sports. Cameras will follow the former University of Missouri football player as he works to earn a spot on the Rams while under a media microscope.

■ Casey Kasem was located in Washington state Thursday, three days after a Los Angeles judge expressed concerns about the ailing radio host's whereabouts and safety.

■ Emma Watson, 24, star of the Harry Potter series of films, is graduating from Brown University this month with a degree in English literature.

The stewards of the James Bond franchise will use their talent for intrigue to produce a movie based on reporter Glenn Greenwald's book about Edward Snowden's leak of top-secret U.S. surveillance documents. Sony Pictures said Wednesday that EON Productions' Michael Wilson and Barbara Broccoli will produce the film based on "No Place to Hide" by Edward Snowden, the NSA and the U.S. Surveillance State."

■ A "Breaking Bad" spinoff on Walter White's shady attorney, "Better Call Saul," will be filmed in Albuquerque, the New Mexico Film Office announced Wednesday. In a statement, officials said that the TV series will be shot at Albuquerque Studios — which was home to the six-year run of "Breaking Bad."

From wire reports



CBS/AP

Ashton Kutcher, left, and Jon Cryer will say farewell to their characters when "Two and a Half Men" comes to an end.



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EXCHANGE

WORLD

11 killed in 2 bombings in Iraq

By SINAN SALAHEDDIN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A car bomb and a suicide bomber struck on Thursday in a bustling area in downtown Baghdad, killing at least 11 people and wounding 33, officials said.

The first explosion was from an explosives-laden car left in a parking lot in Karrada, a busy commercial area where several government offices are also located, as well as courts and a hospital.

Four civilians and three policemen were killed in that attack, and 21 people were wounded, a police officer said.

A few minutes later, a suicide bomber with an explosives belt blew himself up at the main gate of an office affiliated with the Higher Education Ministry, killing two policemen and two civilians,

the police officer said. Twelve other people were wounded in that blast.

A medical official confirmed the casualty figures. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to media.

Ambulances rushed to the scene, which was quickly sealed off by security forces as black smoke billowed into the sky.

A military helicopter hovered overhead and shop owners cleaned shattered glass from their stores.

Since last year, Iraq has been seeing the worst level of violence since the nation emerged from Shiite-Sunni bloodletting in 2008.

The U.N. says 8,868 people were killed in 2013, and more than 1,400 people were killed in January and February of this year.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for Thursday's attack, which came two days after a series of car bombings rocked the capital and killed at least 34 people — the bloodiest day in Iraq since April 28, when militant strikes on polling stations and other targets killed 46.

An al-Qaida spin-off group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The latest attacks come nearly two weeks after Iraqis cast ballots in the country's first parliamentary election since the U.S. military withdrawal in 2011.

No preliminary results have been released, deepening a sense of uncertainty in a country strained by a resurgence of violence.

Activists: 29 killed in northern Syria

BEIRUT — An explosion near a border crossing between Syria and Turkey killed as many as 29 people and wounded many others Thursday, an activist group monitoring the Syrian civil war said.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the explosion occurred at a garage near the Bab al-Salameh border crossing in the northern Syrian province of Aleppo. The garage is used by passengers who come to or leave the crossing point, said Rami Abdurrahman, the Observatory's chief.

Abdurrahman said it was not immediately clear if a suicide bomber caused the blast. He said those wounded were being treated in Turkish and Syrian hospitals. He said the dead included at least five women and three children.

The Local Coordination Committees, another activist group, said a car bomb at the border crossing killed and wounded "many" people.

In Turkey, a government official said 48 wounded Syrians were brought across the border for treatment and that 13 of them had died. Thirty-five of them were being treated in various hospitals near the Turkish-Syrian border, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

From The Associated Press

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Single dad Danny Goodman finds himself unable to afford the private school his teenage daughter adores and accepts a loan that brings the DEA into his life and leads to an impossible choice: indictment for accepting drug money or an unthinkable treacherous undercover assignment.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Booze buyers cross border for low prices

ID STATE LINE — The State Line Liquor Store is just across the border in Idaho, and has become a major destination for booze buyers from Washington.

The store opened a few months after Washington voters passed Initiative 1183, which two years ago privatized liquor sales in Washington.

KXLY-TV of Spokane reported that since then, officials in Kootenai County, Idaho, have seen an increase of \$7 million in liquor sales each year.

The Idaho State Liquor Division says Kootenai County had the highest growth in the state.

The prices keep customers coming back. A price check for a fifth of Black Velvet on either side of the border, showed it costs \$10 in Idaho and \$16 in Washington.

School official resigns after 'chubby' remark

NY MAHOPAC — A New York school board president who described a PTA parent as "chubby wubby" during a public meeting has resigned.

The Journal News said Ray Cote's resignation was announced at a Mahopac Board of Education meeting Tuesday night.

The school district's attorney says Cote also withdrew his candidacy for re-election.

Cote issued an apology. He called his words "inappropriate" and said they "do not reflect my feelings or attitudes."

Cote is a member of a diversity and sensitivity initiative created following racist tweets posted by some Mahopac students during a basketball game.

Couple report finding pot in their burgers

IA OTTUMWA — Police are investigating an Iowa couple's report that they found marijuana among the layers on their double cheeseburgers.

The couple told police they bought the burgers at the McDonald's drive-thru on Richmond Street in Ottumwa on April 26. Ottumwa police Lt. Jason Bell said they reported that, after taking at least a bite each, they noticed plant material that smelled and looked like pot.

The two told the restaurant management about what they found and then contacted Ottumwa police. A sample of the substance was sent to the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation for testing. No arrests have been reported.

Restaurant managers have declined to comment.

Man charged after crashing into TV station

MD TOWSON — A man accused of slamming a stolen truck into a television station was charged Wednesday with second-degree attempted murder, and his father said he had recently become prone to violent outbursts.



LARRY STEAGALL, KITSAP (WASH.) SUN/AP

Fur-st responders to the rescue

Bremerton firefighter Missy Griffith gives a kitten oxygen as Central Kitsap firefighter Owen Rhodes provides water at a mobile home fire at the Erland Point Mobile Home and RV Park on Tuesday in Bremerton, Wash. Rhodes rescued the kitten from the fire. A shed was burned to the ground and a mobile home was damaged.

"He'd be screaming 'Oh, boy! Oh, boy!' and sometimes he would punch the walls," Jean-Claudy Baptiste, 64, said of his son, Vladimir. "When someone keeps screaming 'Oh, boy! Oh, boy!' I thought something was wrong." Vladimir Baptiste, 28, of Parkville, is charged with three counts of second-degree attempted murder, police said. He also faces charges of assault, burglary and malicious destruction of property and theft, online court records show. He was being held at the Baltimore County Detention Center on \$750,000 bail.

Baptiste was taken into custody Tuesday after spending nearly five hours barricaded inside WMAR-TV in Towson, watching journalists deliver live reports from just outside the building.

Fugitive arrested 40 years after prison break

MI ZEELAND — A man accused of escaping from a South Carolina jail nearly 40 years ago has been captured in western Michigan.

Federal marshals said Dallas Smallwood, 58, was arrested Monday in Zeeland, 25 miles southwest of Grand Rapids. He's accused of escaping from an Anderson County, S.C., jail in 1977 while under a five-year sentence for grand larceny and receiving stolen goods.

The U.S. Marshals Service said Smallwood, a trucker, was using the name Waylon Wilson. He's in custody awaiting extradition to South Carolina.

Jail time for man who stole, sold skeletons

OH COLUMBUS — An Ohio man convicted of stealing and selling human skulls and skeletons from a medical college was sentenced Tuesday to 15 months in prison and ordered to pay \$85,000 in restitution.

Weston Moquin, 29, who was an anatomical assistant in the anatomy lab at Ohio University in Athens, pleaded guilty to stealing human remains, autopsy saws and other items from the school, reaping profits from online sales.

Federal Judge James Graham handed down Moquin's sentence at a hearing in Columbus.

Defense attorney Keith Yeazel had asked that Moquin get pro-

THE CENSUS



The amount of cash a boy found in a Kansas City, Mo., hotel room, stacked in a drawer, before turning it over to two off-duty police officers working security at the hotel in May last year. A year later, the money is still unclaimed but the boy, Tyler Schaefer, won't see any of it because of a Missouri law written in 1939. In order to stake claim to it, he would have had to file an affidavit with a state court judge within 10 days of finding it; physically posted a list describing the money on the courthouse door and at four other public places; and taken out newspaper ads for three consecutive weeks. The boy deserves the money, Police Capt. Tye Grant said. "We wish the law allowed us to give it back to him," he said.

bation, saying he's a first-time, nonviolent offender who stole to support a painkiller addiction he developed after a back injury.

Federal prosecutors had asked for Moquin to serve 27 months in prison, arguing that he abused a position of trust and damaged Ohio University's reputation.

"As a result of the theft and attendant publicity, the body donor program received many inquiries and it is unknown, and probably unknowable, whether people decided against such a donation based on defendant Moquin's actions," prosecutors Deborah So-love wrote in court documents.

Police: Woman ordered people's home bulldozed

FL ST. AUGUSTINE — Authorities said a north-east Florida woman who didn't like her neighbors had their mobile home demolished.

According to an arrest report, Ana Maria Moreta Polch, of St. Augustine, told a heavy equipment operator that she owned the trailer and wanted it and its septic tank destroyed.

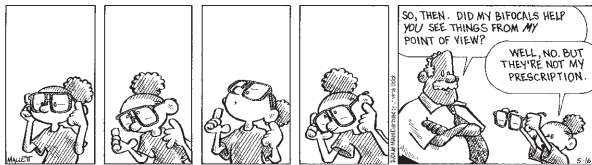
The Florida Times-Union reported that St. Johns County Sheriff's deputies were called when the trailer's real owner arrived Monday and found the demolition underway.

The arrest report said Moreta Polch wanted the trailer bulldozed because she thought its occupants were unsavory and she suspected they had broken into her car.

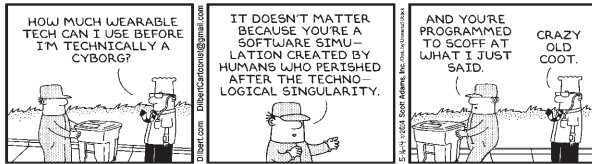
Moreta Polch was charged with criminal mischief, a third-degree felony. She was released Wednesday on \$10,000 bail. Jail records did not show whether she had an attorney.

From wire reports

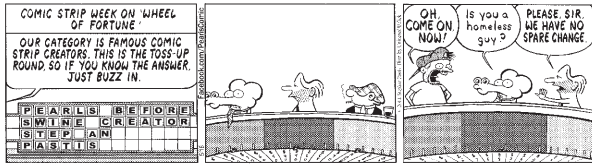
Frazz



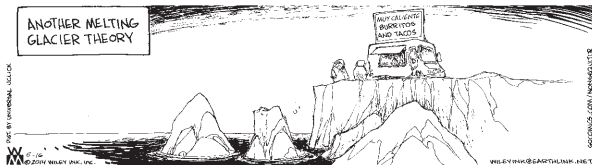
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



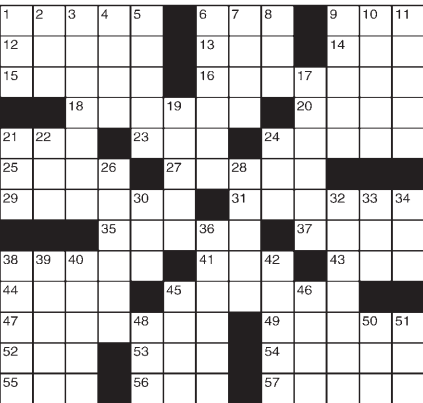
Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Tropical melon
- 6 Big bother
- 9 — de deux
- 12 1998-2004 Olds model
- 13 Kitten's call
- 14 Literary collection
- 15 Jeans material
- 16 Fine
- 18 Like some doughnuts
- 20 Wolverine's group
- 21 — Dhab
- 23 Neither mate
- 24 Mess up
- 25 Eye part
- 27 Copy, for short
- 29 Bitter ill-will
- 31 Walked unsteadily
- 35 Valerie Harper role
- 37 Big rig

DOWN

- 1 Cushion
- 2 Brewery product
- 3 Gotham City waddler
- 4 Seed coat
- 5 Female
- 6 Current measure
- 7 "Monopoly" card
- 8 Possess
- 9 Fortuneteller's reading material?
- 10 Started the pot
- 11 Refuse
- 17 Self-evident truths
- 19 Don Diego de la Vega
- 21 Melody
- 22 Underwear with underwire
- 24 Med. diagnostic tool
- 26 Scenario
- 28 Wood-shaving tool
- 30 Resistance unit
- 32 Collegian wall decoration
- 33 Ostrich's kin
- 34 Cacophony
- 36 Window in a roof
- 38 Contrail, e.g.
- 39 "—": clock scholar?
- 40 Recipient
- 42 Rage
- 45 Castro's place
- 46 Vicinity
- 48 Cartesian conclusion
- 50 Encountered
- 51 Shock partner

Answer to Previous Puzzle



5-16

CRYPTOQUIP

LXOG WAYNI OG M DYVSTAMB
TVY, WEL XI VIMAAB
JIISG LY LMNI M GXYDIV.

XI'G M TEJOIQL TEJ QIQL.
Yesterday's **Cryptoquip**: THAT WOMAN IS MORBIDLY AFRAID OF ANY COMPUTER SHOKTUCUT. I WOULD SAY SHE HAS MACROPHOBIA.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals P

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OMBUDSMAN

Ernie Gates

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting on attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.761.0587.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

‘Unpublishing’ news stories is no longer unthinkable but it’s mostly unacceptable

By ERNIE GATES

Stars and Stripes ombudsman

Readers ask me fairly often how to find a Stars and Stripes article from their time in uniform — a B-17 raid on Germany, a photograph from Korea, a mention of their unit in the Mekong Delta, or something more recent. I ordinarily send those readers to the Heritage Newspaper Archive (<http://starsandstripes.newspaperarchive.com>), where for a reasonable fee they can search a database of more than 1 million Stripes pages from 1948 to 1999. Searches earlier than 1948 are much trickier, usually requiring eye-straining hours with microfilm.

Whether the search is simple or painstaking, the Stripes archive is a pretty remarkable historical record.

But sometimes the questions are not about what people want to find in the archive, but what they want to erase — less about nostalgia and more about remorse. In the interest of job-hunting, bank loans, security clearances or just plain embarrassment, people would like to “correct” the record of some of their moments in the spotlight.

In effect, they’d like to “unpublish” unflattering stories.

In the age of paper and ink, the idea would be preposterous. No one would — or could — clip out all the old stories from all the old newspapers. That part’s still true — but the digital archive is another thing. The fact that the digital record can be altered has made “unpublishing” a meaningful question in journalism ethics.

With the expansion of digital publishing, editors and publishers have increasingly gotten requests to “erase” material from their online archive. For the most part, and with good cause, they’ve refused. The underlying principle is that accurate, published stories are part of a historical record, and to tamper with that record risks the trust and credibility at the heart of their relationship with readers.

Of course, there are exceptions, and groups such as the Associated Press Managing Editors and others have suggested guidelines and best practices for making those decisions.

The leaders of the Stars and Stripes newsroom consulted those sources and others to formulate their own approach to

“unpublishing.” As ombudsman, I’ve made suggestions and pointed to resources such as the APME report. Stripes will publish the result soon, and I’ll be interested to hear reactions from readers.

Meanwhile, here’s a quick take from my look at the draft and my talks with Editorial Director Terry Leonard and Web Manager Joe Gromelski.

As it should, and in keeping with the judgment of most newsrooms, the Stripes approach will lean hard against “unpublishing” a story that was accurate when it was published. If later events make the original story a materially incomplete account and unfair, then the solution will be to verify the new information and update the story or annotate the archive, rather than eliminate the original.

For example, a story about a commander being relieved for “lack of confidence in his ability to lead” after allegations of misconduct might require an update if a subsequent investigation results in his exoneration. In the normal course of reporting, such an update ought to be a standard follow-up story, prompted by a periodic “pop-up” alert in the reporter’s calendar. But that doesn’t always happen, and press releases about exonerations are scarcer than press releases about commanders being relieved. The story that allegations were made and the commander was relieved would still be accurate, but fairness would require that the record include the outcome.

In short: Fix it, don’t erase it.

There may be cases, but they will and ought to be rare, when the original story is altered in the archive. For instance, Leonard recalled a story identifying two Marines who were arrested after the war, but only one was eventually charged in a slow-moving judicial system. The identity of the Marine who was never charged was later removed from the story in the digital archive — and the fact that it was altered was noted on the story. That note is an important attempt to be transparent to readers, to communicate that such “amendments” to stories are rare and not done secretly.

Though Stripes’ approach will intentionally make it hard to “unpublish,” these will be judgment calls, as with most ethical choices. So it’s important that the decision not be left to one person, partly for a check and balance, but also because hear-

ing multiple perspectives tends to yield fairer results. Stripes’ process will begin with the web staff launching the effort to verify new information, then making a recommendation to senior editors who will make a decision. Appeals from that decision would go to the publisher. In some cases, legal advice would be required.

That process isn’t described yet in the draft, but it ought to be, as a matter of transparency.

Of course, amending or annotating the digital archive at Stripes or any other original publication doesn’t entirely correct the record in the broader digital world. Stories are routinely republished and re-archived by third parties, excerpted in other accounts, cached in older searches and on other websites and so on. That original version is still out there somewhere.

Or is it? What if the searching algorithm looks the other way?

Just this week, the European Union’s top court ruled that people have a “right to be forgotten” — meaning that search engines, such as Google, which lost that court case, would be required to alter their search parameters on request so certain personal information is excluded. The court explicitly does not expect the information to be eradicated from its original source of publication, but the decision has editors and publishers worried that more such censorship is around the corner.

I expect that publicity about the EU’s Google case will spur the number of “unpublishing” requests at most newspapers, including Stripes. Having done the research and had the internal discussions necessary to develop and put its own guidelines in writing — and soon share them with readers — will make Stripes better prepared to meet those requests openly.

That doesn’t mean everybody’s going to be happy with the decision. But it does mean that Stripes is ready to balance competing values and make responsible judgments as it honors its commitment to accuracy and the historical record, respects and preserves the public’s right to know, and treats the people it writes about fairly.

Got a question or suggestion for the ombudsman on what appears, or should appear, in Stars and Stripes? Send an email to ombudsman@stripes.com, or phone 202-761-0587 in the States. For several links associated with this column, please go to Ernie Gates’ blog. It can be found at stripes.com/blogs.

Millions of reasons to keep Starbucks ‘dry’

By GREG WILLIAMS

Recently Starbucks announced it would expand its offerings and start selling alcoholic drinks in the evening in thousands of its stores. The move was touted by chief executive Howard Schultz as a strategy for the company to grow profits by increasing the average sale per customer.

Schultz’s shareholders no doubt exchanged a mental fist-bump. But the celebratory party will be short-lived once they realize that they are in danger of turning away a key coffee-consuming segment: more than 23 million Americans living in recovery from substance-use disorders.

Every day, people in recovery meet up in Starbucks cafes to support one another, to talk to their 12-step sponsors and, most of all, to be welcomed in one of the few lively, popular, alcohol-free gathering places in their community.

Starbucks should pay special attention to them.

One of the most useful concepts in business is the Pareto principle, or what is commonly known as the 80/20 rule. This widely adopted marketing principle — that 20 percent of input causes 80 percent of the result — suggests that 80 percent of all coffee consumed at Starbucks is derived from just 20 percent of its customer base.

And who might be part of that base? The October 2008 issue of the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* found that 88.5 percent of those studied who were in recovery from alcoholism drank coffee. Thirty-three percent of those coffee drinkers drank more than four cups a day.

That means millions of recovering people drink coffee, and a third of them drink a lot of it.

If you closed your eyes and pictured a 12-step meeting room, you’d probably picture a coffee urn and plastic foam cups stacked

next to it. And you’d be right. After a typical meeting, you’d see groups of people leaving together to head for the local Starbucks.

In the short run, Schultz may be adding a new set of customers who bring in a \$20-plus sale once a week. But if the evening culture of the cafes turns into a hybrid bar scene, Starbucks will be at serious risk of forcing out a devoted set of high-stake, existing customers. Many of them may already spend more than \$20 a day on alcohol-free beverages.

If Starbucks executives studied this market demographic, perhaps they would think twice about this move. They don’t have to be driven by the spirit of supporting people’s journey of recovery from addiction. They could do it just for their shareholders.

The writer has been in recovery from alcohol and drug use for more than 12 years. He wrote and produced the documentary “The Anonymous People,” about long-term recovery. This commentary first appeared in *The Washington Post*.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Dispense with solar politics The (Paris, Tenn.) Post-Intelligencer

President Barack Obama is announcing a bundle of plans for boosting solar power and promoting energy efficiency.

That may be about all he can do on his own authority without support from Congress, but it's still half a loaf.

One of the steps he was touting was completion of solar panel installation on the White House roof. Well, whoopee.

Jimmy Carter put solar panels on the roof of the executive residence, but Ronald Reagan had them removed. That made the panels a political football rather than a modest efficiency tool.

The panels will be more effective as a symbol of presidential policy than as a real contribution to the nation's energy efficiency.

America needs a broader, more inclusive energy policy, but it's never going to get one as long as political leaders hold to hard-line policy.

"The president can't claim an 'all of the above' strategy while he's blocking the Keystone pipeline, slow-rolling the approval of new energy exploration and proposing job-killing regulations that will destroy the American coal industry," said a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner, the ultra-Republican from Ohio.

But the president's partisan rhetoric, and the man has a point. Solar panels do not a policy make. Power-saving green steps alone can't meet our energy needs.

The energy efficiency guys and the we-need-more-power bunch need to bury the hatchet. The issue is too important to the national well-being to be a focus for political games.

Benghazi smoking gun?

Marietta (Ga.) Daily Journal

President Barack Obama spent the past year and a half witnessing that questions about the Benghazi attack would just go away. You can bet that former Secretary of State and Democratic presidential nominee-in-waiting Hillary Clinton is wishing the same thing, except more so.

But that isn't likely to happen thanks to damning information that has now come to light. And while our friends on the left here in Georgia and elsewhere love to try and spin Benghazi as a Fox News fantasy, The public has the New York Times to thank for the latest revelations about how minimizing the damage to Obama's 2012 re-election campaign — not national security — was the top priority in the White House in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2012, tragedy that left Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans dead at the hands of Libyan terrorists.

The attack on the embassy there came against a backdrop of Team Obama's repeated assertions that the war on terrorism was over and that we had won.

The attacks in Libya ran counter to that, so Obama and those around him quickly came up with an alternative version: that the supposedly spontaneous demonstrations and the attacks that followed were inspired by an amateurish, obscure Internet video, even though the evidence and common sense ran counter to that.

The Times reported late last month that Obama's deputy national security adviser, Benjamin J. Rhodes, emailed U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice on Sept. 14, 2012, just



AP

A man walks in the rubble where an attack killed four Americans, including Ambassador Chris Stevens, on Sept. 11, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya. Congressional Republicans are pressing another investigation into the attack.

before she made a round of high-profile appearances on Sunday morning news-talk shows that day.

Rhodes urged Rice to "underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure of policy" and that she should "reinforce the President and Administration's strength and steadiness in dealing with difficult challenges."

It's the "smoking gun" that proves the administration misled the American public about the Benghazi incident right from the very start.

Climate scare-mongering Boston Herald

The Obama administration is trying to scare us with totally unverifiable projections of a disastrous global warming. We trust that most people are not going to fall for this outrageous scare-mongering.

The ballyhooed third National Climate Assessment, released last Wednesday by several agencies, alleges first that the world has warmed over the last century and second that it's going to get much worse.

This is supposed to convince us of the wisdom of President Barack Obama's plans to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, the chief gas said to be warming the planet.

It has indeed warmed slightly (by at most 1.9 degrees Fahrenheit) over the past 100 years. Saying so ignores an unexplained cooling from about 1940 into the 1970s. It warmed from the 1970s to 1998; there has been no warming since even as carbon dioxide concentrations rose.

Predictions of floods here and heat waves there and falling sky somewhere else are produced by already failed computer models. None can reproduce changes in temperature observed in the past. Relying on such failed prophets is folly.

Unsurpassed critics note that the concentrations of water vapor in the troposphere that are supposed to amplify warming simply aren't there.

The assessment rambles about heat and rainfall and other unpleasantness, but pays no attention to the fact that there is no trend in the incidence of tornadoes, or the fact that hurricanes making landfall are at a record low, or the fact that even more emission cuts than Obama wants would lower the temperature in 2100 by one-seventh of a degree.

As Yogi Berra said, it's tough to make predictions, especially about the future. The country needs a devil's advocate, with adequate funds for research independent of the army of alarmists who have built careers on dubious dogma.

Afghanistan perspective Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

In matters of war and international politics, a sense of perspective is a useful thing. That's especially so in a place like Afghanistan.

Like many of his peers from Fort Bragg, N.C., Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Colt has that perspective. He's in Afghanistan as deputy commander of the 18th Airborne Corps, which is overseeing the end of America's longest war. It's his second deployment there. His first, a decade ago, was like a trip to a different country.

When Colt commanded the 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment from summer 2002 until summer 2004, he recalls the capital city of Kabul as dark and lifeless at night. Ten years later, it's filled with light and activity. The city is growing and thriving.

So are the country's National Security Forces, which didn't exist in 2004. Now 350,000 strong, the Afghan forces "don't need our prompting anymore," Colt told Observer reporter Drew Brooks.

That's good, because as the U.S. and its NATO allies prepare to largely withdraw, the world needs to know that the nation won't revert to the dark place it was. We need some assurance Afghanistan won't slip back into the grip of fundamentalists like the Taliban, who turned the nation into a leading exporter of trained terrorists.

Even as military leaders prepare for the end of the international military coalition's mission in Afghanistan, other Fort Bragg units are scattered about the country, showing the Taliban and other insurgents that they're still ready for battle. The forays into the countryside are useful and reassuring to Afghan soldiers...

The final decision about long-term American presence in Afghanistan will be made by President Barack Obama, and so far, he's holding his cards close. It's unclear whether there will be a few thousand American troops left in the country next year, or 10,000, or none. Whatever the number, it's got to be enough to prevent Afghanistan from slipping back into the hands of fundamentalists who embrace terrorism. Anything less is unacceptable.

Values worth fighting for Kansas City (Mo.) Star

The tragic plight of the missing girls of Chibok, Nigeria, has triggered heartfelt and hand-wringing around the world. And it has opened vexing examinations of a nation in chaos and an international commu-

nity unsure of how best to respond.

The fact that the girls' kidnappers — the fanatic, anti-Western Islamists known as Boko Haram — have been terrorizing their nation's impoverished northeastern region for years has prompted appropriate questions about the abilities and priorities of the Nigerian government. Boys have been slaughtered. Schools and villages have burned. Boko Haram has led a vicious campaign to douse the spirit of Christians and Muslims alike, and to expunge the idea that enlightened education leads to better lives.

Prominent people are speaking out and challenging others to raise awareness and concern. The U.S. and other nations are supplying advisers to help gather intelligence and to aid a rescue of the kidnapped teenagers, saying them, it is hoped, from the marriage enslavement market and other crimes against humanity.

Still, it's abundantly clear that there are limits to what Americans and other outsiders can do. Boko Haram issued signals that it is willing to negotiate, perhaps trading the captive girls for imprisoned brothers in arms. The Nigerian government rejected that deal. Proceedings from here will be delicate and unpredictable.

The Chibok kidnapping crisis is indeed horrendous and awakening. It comes at a time of increasing violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic and South Sudan...

Yet, the Nigeria story seems especially alarming on a human scale. All those girls, taking a test at school when they were abducted, represent an incalculable future.

To understand the potential of young women like them — girls who aspire to freedom and betterment amid rigid, medieval settings — one need look no further than Kansas City. The Star's Joe Robertson on Sunday reported the inspiring story of Cynthia Odu, who left Nigeria as an infant with her parents and now, at 18, having graduated from Kansas City Christian Academy, is bound for college at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

These two stories, one of horror and another of triumph, remind us that certain values, like universal education, are worth fighting for.

Keep the U-2 flying The (Memphis, Tenn.) Commercial Appeal

The U-2 "Dragon Lady" spy plane, a product of the famed Lockheed "Skunk Works," first flew in 1955. It was one of the most successful aircraft ever built, and it is still flying.

The U-2's designated successor, the SR-71 Blackbird, was retired in 1988. Now the same fate threatens the 32 remaining U-2s even though they continue to provide valuable intelligence, especially from remote and secretive areas like North Korea, where they peer down from the relatively safe altitude of 70,000 feet.

Unfortunately, the U-2 is best remembered for an incident when that altitude proved not to be ending hopes that it would mark the start of a period of "peaceful coexistence" between the U.S. and the USSR. Relations between the two countries eventually reverted to a chilly standoff while the U-2 continued peering into the doings of our foes, likely eyes and those whose mysterious activities — among them, the placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba — aroused our curiosity.

Although the military has \$598 million in the 2015 budget to keep the U-2 flying, the Air Force is proposing to begin a phaseout of the U-2 in favor of unmanned drones like the Global Hawk. While drones have more than proved their worth, the U-2 is no substitute for on-the-spot human judgment.

PREAKNESS STAKES



GARRY JONES/AP

Ria Antonia, the lone filly in the Preakness, looks over the foggy track with exercise rider Maurice Sanchez aboard at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore on Thursday. Ria Antonia is a 30-1 underdog.

Feeling good about his filly

Co-owner of Ria Antonia expects long shot to be right in the running

BY DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Maybe it's because she's a girl among boys. Perhaps it's because the horse hasn't won in 10 months, or ever attempted a race this long.

Whatever the reason, Ria Antonia is the long shot in the 10-horse Preakness field, a whopping 30-1 underdog behind 3-5 favorite California Chrome, the Kentucky Derby winner.

"I wish she was 50-1," co-owner Ron Paolucci said of Ria Antonia. "The way she works and trains, she thinks she's 3-5."

After finishing sixth in the Kentucky Oaks two weeks ago, Ria Antonia will attempt to become the first filly to win the Preakness since Rachel Alexandra in 2009. Paolucci isn't guaranteeing a victory Saturday, but he expects his 3-year-old to be right there.

"She's as fast as any horse in the race," Paolucci insisted. "She worked with all of (Hall of Fame trainer) Bob Baffert's horses and she more than held her own. She's a great work horse. Has she translated that every race? No. But she has the ability. Can she beat California Chrome if he runs as good as he did in the Derby? No. Would it be embarrassing to run second if California Chrome runs freakishly good again? No. We're not planning on being that far out of it."

Paolucci likes the way his horse rebounded from the May 2 race at Churchill Downs, so he thought it would be a good idea to enter the Preakness.

"I'm not looking forward to running against Cali-

By the numbers

1³/16

Miles in the Preakness, making it the longest race Ria Antonia has run.

fornia Chrome, but if I have to do it, I want to do it on two weeks (rest)," he said. "She's ready to go, she's kicking down the barn. I think it's right up her alley. If she runs half as good as she trains, I wouldn't want to trade with anybody."

Ria Antonia will be ridden by Calvin Borel, who was replaced on Ride On Curlin by Joel Rosario. Ride On Curlin and General a Rod are the only two horses from the Derby who went to Pimlico for a rematch with California Chrome.

California Chrome drew the No. 3 post, which wasn't perfect but not a huge disappointment.

"Three is fine with me," 77-year-old trainer Art Sherman said. "Most of the speed is on the outside of me. If they go they go, I can tuck in right behind them without any problems. I look for a good race. I think my horse will perform at the Preakness."

Less than 20 feet away in the same room, Paolucci explained why Sherman and California Chrome jockey Victor Espinoza should be worried.

"From where he drew it's going to be very interesting how Espinoza rides because you're not going to want to get trapped down inside when Social Inclusion is on the lead," Paolucci said. "Bayern is going to be out there. There's no easy spot for Victor. It's not going to be as easy as the Derby."

Preakness: Social Inclusion a threat to Triple Crown hopes

FROM BACK PAGE

"Oh, boy, 3-5, it makes you want to choke," said his trainer, Art Sherman. "But I wouldn't want to be in anybody else's position. Hey, listen, when you can be the 3-5 favorite in the Preakness, you must have deserved to be that."

Sherman describes himself as more of a pragmatist than Co-burn. He downplayed talk of his horse's sweeping through the Preakness and Belmont Stakes.

"Oh, man, I think about the Triple Crown, but I'm a race-by-race kind of guy," said the 77-year-old Sherman, who has never trained a horse on this kind of stage. "Let's get over with the Preakness."

With California Chrome so pre-eminent, the nine other entrants have felt like afterthoughts at times this week. But Social Inclusion, the 5-1 second choice in the morning line, is a new threat: the rare 3-year-old who has run as fast as peak California Chrome.

Owner Ron Sanchez was initially concerned with Social Inclusion's No. 8 post draw. His mood brightened when he saw slower starters Kid Cruz and Ria Antonia inside his horse. He came away predicting a clean break to the lead for his speedy challenger.

"We're going to be in a good position in the early stage," he said. "I think we have a nice spot."

Sanchez praised California Chrome but said the favorite would have to run harder in the early stages of the Preakness than he did in the slow-paced Kentucky Derby. "I'm never afraid of nothing," he added.

Many expect Saturday's race to be ruled by early speed. Beyond Social Inclusion, Bob Baffert-trained Bayern and late Derby scratch Pablo Del Monte like to set an aggressive early pace. Bayern will start from the No. 5 post as a 10-1 third choice in the morning line. Pablo Del Monte will start from the No. 9 post at 20-1 odds.

If the speed horses jump out quickly, which didn't happen at Churchill Downs, California Chrome's reaction could determine his fate. Recent history suggests he is a solid bet in the 1³/₁₆-mile Preakness. Eight of the past 17 Derby champions have also won at Pimlico.

Sherman welcomes the early speed. "I'm really OK with it," he said. "My horse is kind of push-button. He can stay with any horse in the race. I'm going to get on his back, and I know that Victor (Espinoza) will ride him well."

He seemed unsure what to make of Social Inclusion, given the gifted challenger's light, three-race resume.

"I watched him run," Sherman said. "He acts like a runner, but I just don't know where to put him, how to put him in a category. I know he runs fast, but does he have that much ability when somebody's got the same ability?"

Only two other challengers from the Derby, Ride on Curlin and General a Rod, are taking a shot at California Chrome in Baltimore. Ride on Curlin drew the No. 10 post and is a 10-1 third choice. General a Rod will start from the No. 2 post as a 15-1 choice in the morning line.

Ride on Curlin also drew an outside post in the Derby, but trainer Billy Gowan said it was a bigger problem in a 19-horse field. "I think it's less of a big deal," he said. "We're already eight horses in from where we started in Kentucky. There's a bunch of speed, so we'll just lay off the pace and have a target to shoot for in the end."

He was a touch surprised at the odds on California Chrome. "But he's definitely the horse to beat," Gowan said. "We're just glad to be here with him."

Recent history suggests California Chrome is a solid bet in the Preakness. Eight of the past 17 Derby champions have also won at Pimlico.

Dynamic Impact, a 12-1 fifth choice, drew the dreaded No. 1 spot. But he won from No. 1 at the Illinois Derby. "It's obviously not ideal," assistant trainer Norman Casse said. "But we're not going to be too upset about it."

Feustle put 20-1 odds on two horses with local ties: Maryland

trainer Graham Motion's gelding, Ring Weekend, and late charger Kid Cruz, the only entrant to have won at Pimlico. Filly Ria Antonia is the longest shot at 30-1.

"It's going to be a real rider's race with speed on the inside, speed on the outside," said her co-owner, Ron Paolucci. "Who's going to go? Who's going to not go? I wouldn't want to be on one of the horses that want the front and because whatever judgments these riders make, they're going to get questioned."

The Baltimore Sun's Don Markus and Jon Meoli contributed to this article.

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NHL PLAYOFFS

Bye-bye Bruins

Price, Montreal deliver knockout punch to Boston on road in Game 7

By JIMMY GOLEN
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Carey Price has already led Canada to an Olympic gold medal this year.

Now he has the nation's last remaining NHL playoff team a step closer to the Stanley Cup finals.

The Montreal goalie made 29 saves in a Game 7 victory over the Boston Bruins on Wednesday night, helping the Canadiens advance to the Eastern Conference finals. They will face the New York Rangers when the series opens on Saturday in Montreal.

"He's unbelievable," Canadiens defenseman Andrei Markov said after Price followed up a Game 6 shutout by allowing just one goal in the clincher. "There's not much to explain; he's the best, you know."

Dale Weise, Max Pacioretty and Daniel Briere scored for the Canadiens, who needed a win in Game 6 on Monday to force a Game 7. They beat the Bruins 4-0, then came to Boston and Price dominated again.

It's just the second time since winning their NHL-best 24th Stanley Cup title in 1993 that the Canadiens have reached the third round of the playoffs.

"I am ecstatic," said Price, who was backing up Jaroslav Halak in 2010, the last time Montreal reached the conference finals. "But at the same time you have to realize that it's not over. We are only halfway there."

Weise scored just 2:18 into the game to quiet the Boston crowd and then Pacioretty made it 2-0 midway through the second. Jarome Iginla



As a Bruins fans watches, Canadiens wing Dale Weise, left, celebrates his goal with Brandon Prust during the first period of Montreal's 3-1 win in Game 7 in Boston on Wednesday. AP

"We just beat the best team in the league. Down 3-2, we showed a lot of ... passion. To win a series in Boston, it is a tough place for people to come and play here."

Michel Therrien
Montreal Canadiens coach

cut the Canadiens' lead to 2-1 at the end of the second when Price decided to address his team before the third period.

"He was more confident than I have ever seen him before," Pacioretty said. "He spoke up and said something like 'Only live in the moment, don't worry about the past' ... I'm speechless at how he is playing."

Montreal made it 3-1 with about three minutes left when Briere scored a power-play goal off the skate of Boston's Zdeno Chara.

"We just beat the best team in the league," Montreal coach Michel Therrien said. "Down

3-2, we showed a lot of character, a lot of passion. To win a series in Boston, it is a tough place for people to come and play here."

In front of boisterous crowds on both sides of the border, the Canadiens won the 34th playoff series between the two clubs — the ninth that went the seven-game distance.

Boston finished with the best record in the regular season this year, but its road stopped against its Original Six rival in another classic playoff series. After finishing the regular season with an NHL-best 117 points, home-ice advantage meant little to the Bruins.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)

SEMIFINALS
Montreal 4, Boston 3
Montreal 4, Boston 3, 2OT
Boston 5, Montreal 3
Montreal 4, Boston 2
Boston 1, Montreal 0, OT
Boston 4, Montreal 2
Montreal 4, Boston 0
Wednesday: Montreal 3, Boston 1
N.Y. Rangers 4, Pittsburgh 3
N.Y. Rangers 3, Pittsburgh 2, OT
Pittsburgh 2, N.Y. Rangers 0
Pittsburgh 4, N.Y. Rangers 2
N.Y. Rangers 5, Pittsburgh 1
N.Y. Rangers 3, Pittsburgh 1
N.Y. Rangers 2, Pittsburgh 1

FINALS
N.Y. Rangers vs. Montreal
Saturday: at Montreal
Rest of series TBA

Western Conference

SEMIFINALS
Chicago 4, Minnesota 2
Chicago 4, Minnesota 2
Minnesota 4, Chicago 0
Minnesota 4, Chicago 2
Chicago 2, Minnesota 1
Chicago 2, Minnesota 1, OT
Anaheim 3, Los Angeles 3
Los Angeles 3, Anaheim 2, OT
Los Angeles 3, Anaheim 1
Anaheim 3, Los Angeles 2
Anaheim 2, Los Angeles 0
Anaheim 4, Los Angeles 3
Wednesday: Los Angeles 2, Anaheim 1
Friday: at Anaheim
FINALS
Chicago vs. Anaheim/Los Angeles
Sunday: Chicago at Anaheim OR Los Angeles at Chicago
Rest of series TBA

Wednesday

Canadians 3, Bruins 1

Montreal	1	1	1-3
Boston	0	0	1-0

First Period—1, Montreal, Weise 3 (Briere, Prust), 2:18.
Second Period—2, Montreal, Pacioretty 3 (Desharnais, Gallagher), 10:22, 3, Boston, Iginla 5 (Ortu, Krejci), 17:58 (pp).
Third Period—4, Montreal, Briere 2 (Gallagher), 10:17 (pp).
Shots on Goal—Montreal 6-8-4=18, Boston 9-13-8=30.
Power-play opportunities—Montreal 1 of 5; Boston 1 of 3.
Goalies—Montreal, Price 8-3-0 (30 shots=29 saves), Boston, Rask 7-5-0 (18-15).
A—17,565 (17,565), **T**—2:40.

Kings 2, Ducks 1

Anaheim	0	1	0-1
Los Angeles	1	1	0-2

First Period—1, Los Angeles, Muzzin 3 (Kopitar, Gaborko), 8:16.
Second Period—2, Los Angeles, Lewis 4 (Williams, Vovynov), 14:04, 3, Anaheim, Palmieri 2 (Bonino), 15:42.
Shots on Goal—Anaheim 5-7-10=22, Los Angeles 8-8-7=23.
Power-play opportunities—Anaheim 0 of 5; Los Angeles 0 of 4.
Goalies—Anaheim, Gibson 2-1-0 (23 shots=21 saves), Los Angeles, Quick 7-6-0 (22-21).
A—18,519 (18,118), **T**—2:33.

Unlikely heroes emerge as Kings' top Ducks, avoid elimination

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — After conceivably almost every conceivable obstacle in the Stanley Cup playoffs over the last few years, the pressure of an elimination game doesn't bother the Los Angeles Kings.

With goals from two unlikely sources and a vintage game from their star goalie, the Kings methodically made sure the first postseason Freeway Faceoff will go the limit.

Trevor Lewis scored his fourth goal of the postseason, Jonathan Quick made 21 saves, and the Kings forced a seventh game with a 2-1 victory over the Anaheim Ducks in Game 6 on Wednesday night at Staples Center.

Jake Muzzin scored an early goal for the Kings, who ended their three-game skid with an-

other sturdy defensive effort at home.

Los Angeles improved to 6-1 in postseason elimination games over the last two seasons while beating Ducks goalie John Gibson for the first time in his six-game NHL career.

The Kings clearly have a hunger for high stakes. The top-seeded Ducks will find out how they taste in Game 7 on Friday night at home inside the Honda Center.

"Our team is built to play in these kinds of games," Kings' defenseman Drew Doughty said. "Our leaders show the way, and everyone follows. We look forward to playing in these games. We're not nervous."

The Kings again proved their postseason credentials are unsailable after winning a Stanley Cup title in 2012 and returning



Los Angeles' Jake Muzzin, left, celebrates his goal in front of Anaheim's Patrick Maroon in Game 6 on Wednesday. AP

to the conference finals last year. Responding to Anaheim's three straight wins with calm, intelligent defense, Los Angeles forced its second seven-game series of this postseason after rallying from

an 0-3 deficit in the first round to stun San Jose.

Los Angeles largely controlled Game 6, shutting down the Ducks' power play and their top scorers. The Kings killed two penalties in the third period and survived the frantic final seconds with barely a hiccup.

"It's a result (of the fact that) this group has been through a lot of things, being in these very uncomfortable situations," Los Angeles captain Dustin Brown said. "When you have that trust and experience with each other, it puts it in perspective. We've been through a lot worse."

Kyle Palmieri scored and Gibson stopped 21 shots for the Ducks, who could have clinched their first trip to the Western Conference finals since 2007.

The Southern California ri-



Los Angeles at Anaheim

Game 7
AFN-Sports
3 a.m. Saturday CET
10 a.m. Saturday JKT

vals' scintillating first postseason meeting is the NHL's only second-round series still going.

The winner of Game 7 at Honda Center faces the defending Stanley Cup champion Blackhawks, who will have four days before the conference finals open Sunday in Anaheim or Chicago.

WORLD CUP



TONY AVELAR/AP

Landon Donovan, right, Mix Diskerud, center, and Chris Wondolowski warm up during a U.S. men's soccer training session on Wednesday in Stanford, Calif. The team began a two-week training camp leading up to a May 27 exhibition with Azerbaijan at San Francisco's Candlestick Park.

US begins training camp in California

The Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — Jurgen Klinsmann cut right to it: The U.S. has some serious catching up to do a month before its World Cup opener.

Klinsmann was eager to get started on a scorching Wednesday afternoon at Stanford Stadium as the Americans began a two-week training camp leading up to a May 27 exhibition with Azerbaijan at San Francisco's Candlestick Park.

While all 30 Americans have yet to arrive in the Bay Area, Klinsmann will have the tough task of cutting his roster to 23 by June 2.

"The reason we take 30 is we're not sure yet," Klinsmann said before his team took the field. "There will be intense training sessions ahead of them in order to show what they have, in every position not only as a center forward, the entire team."

Defender Geoff Cameron and goalkeepers Tim Howard and Brad Guzan are scheduled to arrive Sunday, as Klinsmann gave them a few extra days coming from their Premier League clubs in England.

Clarence Goodson, a defender with the nearby San Jose Earthquakes, led the U.S. team through the Stanford Stadium tunnel and

onto the field for Day 1.

"Whoa hoo hoo!" hollered left back DaMarcus Beasley in the heat.

Forward Chris Wondolowski smiled and said he had consumed plenty of water.

Beasley is trying for his fourth World Cup.

"I still get butterflies," he said.

"I haven't been with the team for a while. To see all the guys' faces, it's good to be back with the team and obviously it's very important. We have a lot of work to do, and a lot of work to be done in these three weeks before the team goes to Brazil."

Klinsmann knows he needs to evaluate everybody in short order — and a versatile, deep defense will be one of those areas even if the group is lacking in World Cup minutes.

Beasley, for one, believes this is the best U.S. squad he has been a part of. The Americans are gearing up for their final three tune-ups before the Group G World Cup opener June 16 against Ghana in Natal.

So what if the odds are against them?

"You should bet on us," Beasley said, chuckling. "You never know what happens. It's one game in a World Cup, whoever's better on that day will win. Simple as that."

Cause for concern?

Much still to be done as World Cup looms

By TALES AZZONI

The Associated Press

SAO PAULO — It's all coming down to the final 30 days.

Brazil had seven years to get ready for the World Cup, but it enters the final month of preparations with a lot yet to be done.

Three stadiums are still under construction, some of the temporary structures needed for matches are delayed and it remains unclear if all cities will have time to organize the mandatory fanfests.

It's already known that not all infrastructure will be completed no matter how much organizers rush before the June 12 opener. The government acknowledges that communications inside stadiums won't be perfect, unfinished airports remain a concern and there are widespread threats of violent protests by Brazilians complaining about the billions of dollars spent to organize the tournament.

Brazilian officials guarantee everything will be fine. FIFA remains concerned.

"Everything will be in place for the World Cup in Brazil to be a success," Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff said Tuesday. "The stadiums will be ready, the airports will be ready, we are guaranteeing public safety."

But Joao Augusto Nardes, president of the government's watchdog group, told Brazil's official news service, Agencia Brasil, on Tuesday that some of the work still isn't in place to provide "adequate security to those attending the World Cup."

FIFA is worried about the stadiums where the 64 matches will be played. It wanted all venues completed by the end of last year, but Brazil was not able to get half of them ready in time. Many will not host all the test events that were planned.

Among the three stadiums under construction is the Itaquero, where the opener between Brazil and Croatia will be played. There will be some 14,000 guests among the nearly 70,000 people in attendance, including many heads of state.

Some of the 20,000 temporary seats needed for the opener are still being installed, and the only official test event planned for the Itaquero takes place Sunday, about three weeks before the opener. It won't even happen in front of a full crowd, with only 40,000 fans allowed into the venue.

"For the World Cup it will all be 100 percent ready," said Andres Sanchez, who is in charge of the stadium's construction.

Another unfinished stadium is the Arena da



DENIS FERREIRA NETTA/AP

Work continues at the Arena da Baixada in Curitiba, Brazil. After seven years to get ready for the World Cup, it's all coming down to the final 30 days for Brazil, with a lot yet to be done. The unfinished stadium in Brazil's southern city of Curitiba was nearly excluded from the tournament by FIFA earlier this year.

Baixada in the southern city of Curitiba, which was nearly excluded from the tournament by FIFA this year. The first full test at the venue is scheduled for this week.

"There were some setbacks in some of these stadiums," said Brazil's Sports Minister Aldo Rebelo, who has been arduously downplaying the delays. "Everything will be ready."

There is also concern with the temporary structures at the Beira-Rio Stadium in southern Porto Alegre, and the other incomplete venue is the Arena Pantanal in the western city of Cuaba, which is only expected to host an official test event at the end of the month.



MAURICIO SIMONETTI, PORTAL DA COPA/AP

The Itaquero stadium in Sao Paulo, Brazil, is shown in this aerial photograph taken in March.

MLB

AL roundup

Abreu helps rally White Sox

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Less than two months into his career, Jose Abreu is already the guy the Chicago White Sox want at the plate when the game is on the line.

Abreu hit a three-run homer in the eighth inning, and the White Sox snapped a four-game losing streak with a 4-2 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Wednesday. "We realize what he is and how important he is to us," manager Robin Ventura said. "When you get in situations like that you're pretty glad he's up there. That's what he means to us. You always feel like you're in a good spot if he's up there with guys on."

Gordon Beckham homered on the first pitch of the game for the White Sox, who rallied against Oakland's bullpen to end a seven-game losing streak at the Coliseum.

John Jaso and Josh Donaldson hit solo homers off Andre Rienzo for the Athletics, who were in line for a season-best seventh straight victory before the bullpen meltdown in the eighth cost Tommy Milone a chance at a win.

Beckham and Conor Gillaspie started the rally with one-out singles against Fernando Abad (0-1), and Abreu greeted Luke Gregerson with a no-doubt drive to left field for his 15th home run of the season.

"He has ridiculous power," Gillaspie said. "When he gets the ball up in the air like that it's going to be tough for it not to leave. Hats

off to him. The guy made a mistake and he took advantage of it."

Abreu, a rookie slugger from Cuba, is the fourth player in major league history to hit 15 homers in his first 42 games, joining Wally Berger, Kevin Maas and Wally Joyner.

"I got the opportunity to hit a good pitch," Abreu said through an interpreter. "All I was doing was trying to hit a ball in the air to bring the guy from third base. But I was able to get a good swing and a good pitch to hit."

Gregerson was trying to make Abreu chase a pitch out of the strike zone but caught too much of the plate instead.

Red Sox 9, Twins 4: David Ortiz homered twice for the second straight game and visiting Boston beat Minnesota.

Big Papi went 3-for-5 with two RBIs, one night after a four-hit performance against his former team. Both of his home runs — off Kevin Correia (1-5) in the third and Caleb Theilbar in the fifth — traveled more than 400 feet into the right-field upper deck at Target Field, where he's batting .528 (.28-for-.53) in 13 career games.

Tigers 7, Orioles 5: Rajai Davis homered, and visiting Detroit overcame a rare shaky performance by Justin Verlander to complete a three-game sweep.

The Tigers have won 12 of their last 15 games, including eight in a row on the road. Baltimore has lost four straight.

Verlander (5-2) allowed a season-high five runs on six hits with

four strikeouts and three walks in six innings.

Rays 2, Mariners 0: Jake Odorizzi pitched one-hit ball for six innings, but visiting Tampa Bay lost All-Star Ben Zobrist.

Zobrist dislocated his left thumb on a headfirst slide while trying to steal second base in the fifth. The valuable all-purpose player jammed himself into the bag after being tagged out, walked off the field holding his hand and later had his thumb adjusted back into place.

Zobrist will remain with the team for the final four games of a West Coast road trip and be re-evaluated when the Rays return home.

Indians 15, Blue Jays 4: David Murphy had five hits and five RBIs and Lonnie Chisenhall had five hits and an RBI and visiting Cleveland beat Toronto.

Corey Kluber (4-3) pitched seven innings to win consecutive starts for the first time this season, and Carlos Santana and Yan Gomes homered as the Indians set season-highs with 22 hits and 15 runs in winning for the sixth time in eight games.

Astros 5, Rangers 4: Matt Dominguez hit an RBI single off the right-field wall in the ninth inning and host Houston won a series against its in-state rival for the first time since 2008.

The Astros took two of three after losing 15 straight series to the Rangers. Houston overcame a four-run deficit to win.



Yankees starting pitcher Masahiro Tanaka stretches to field Daniel Murphy's groundout in the ninth inning Wednesday against the Mets. Tanaka pitched a four-hit shutout and recorded his first major league hit in the game, a 4-0 victory for the Yankees.

Interleague roundup

Tanaka 6-0 after shutting out Mets

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Masahiro Tanaka has been every bit the ace the New York Yankees went shopping for last winter.

Tanaka pitched a four-hitter for his first major league shutout and the Yankees got home runs from Yangervis Solarte and Mark Teixeira on Wednesday night, snapping a four-game skid with a 4-0 victory over the Mets.

"Overall, I think that today was my best day," Tanaka said through a translator.

Brian Roberts tripled twice and the Yankees finally beat their cross-town rivals after dropping six straight meetings.

The Mets took all four Subway Series games last year and won two slugfests in the Bronx this week. Back home at spacious Citi Field, however, their bats went silent again.

"You asked me about the home run barrage? We hit three of them tonight. They were just in the wrong park," manager Terry Collins said.

Tanaka (6-0) overwhelmed the Mets with his vast assortment of pitches while spoiling Rafael Montero's big league debut. The latest to arrive in a line of touted Mets pitching prospects, Montero threw six competitive innings but was no match for the \$155 million rookie from Japan.

In some ways, this is a David-and-Goliath matchup. One guy's never lost and the other guy's never pitched." Mets general manager Sandy Alderson said before the game. "So it's interesting. We'll see how many rocks Rafael's got."

Not enough. Tanaka is 34-0 combined in Japan and North America over

his last 42 regular-season starts. He did lose Game 6 of the Japan Series last year — before earning a save in Game 7.

"I just go up there and basically try to win every single game," Tanaka said.

The right-hander struck out eight and walked none, throwing 114 pitches during his first complete game in the majors. He lowered his ERA to 2.17 and gave the Yankees' taxed bullpen a much-needed break.

Tanaka became the first Yankees rookie to begin his career 6-0 as a starter since Hall of Famer Whitey Ford went 9-0 in 1950. That sort of dependability has been sorely needed, with the Yankees already missing CC Sabathia and two other injured starters.

Royals 3, Rockies 2: Mike Monstakas hit a three-run double in the second inning, and Jason Vargas and host Kansas City's bullpen made it stand up.

Vargas (4-1) did not allow a hit until the fourth inning and did not allow a run until Drew Stubbs belted a two-run homer in the seventh.

Louis Coleman got the Royals out of the inning without any more damage, and Kelvin Herrera worked a perfect eighth before Greg Holland survived a shaky ninth for his 10th save.

Angels 3, Phillies 0: Garrett Richards tossed a five-hitter over seven sharp innings and visiting Los Angeles swept a two-game series.

Mike Trout went 1-for-4 with a triple, walk and stolen base. Richards (4-0) struck out eight, had no walks and lowered his ERA to 2.42.

NL roundup

Brewers snap 3-game losing skid

The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Chris Stewart quickly has become familiar with the repertoire of tough Milwaukee closer Francisco Rodriguez. It paid off for the backup catcher Wednesday night.

One night after grounding out in a nine-pitch at-bat against Rodriguez, Stewart's single keyed a three-run burst in the ninth inning and sent the Pirates past Milwaukee 4-1, ending the Brewers' three-game winning streak. "I saw quite a few pitches from him (Tuesday) night, so I think that helped going into the at-bat," Stewart said. "He stayed away from me (Tuesday) night, so it gave me a read on what he was going to try and do in that situation."

Rodriguez (1-1) threw two quick strikes to Stewart, but left a changeup high on the outside corner of the plate on his third pitch and the Pirates catcher belted it to center, allowing pinch-runner Clint Barmes to score from second with the go-ahead run.

"It was a big swing of the bat for us," Pittsburgh manager Clint Hurdle said.

Rodriguez had given up only one run in 21 innings in his first



The Pirates' Starling Marte hits a two-run-scoring double during the ninth inning against the Brewers on Wednesday. Pittsburgh won 4-1.

21 games. But the Pirates tagged the Milwaukee closer for four consecutive hits to beat the Brewers for only the second time in nine games.

Milwaukee had only six hits and went 0-for-7 with runners in scoring position minus Carlos Gomez. The star center fielder dropped his appeal Wednesday and began a three-game suspension for his part in a bench-clearing fracas at Pittsburgh on Easter Sunday.

"We didn't swing the bat that well," Milwaukee manager Ron Roenicke said.

Marlins 13, Dodgers 3: Ed Lucas homered during a six-run second inning in which second baseman Dee Gordon's fielding error led to five unearned runs, and visiting Miami scored another six runs two innings later.

Anthony DeSclafani (1-0) allowed two runs and seven hits over six innings to earn the win in his major league debut. He had a single and drove in two runs.

Giants 10, Braves 4: Hunter Pence, Michael Morse and Brandon Crawford homered to power host San Francisco.

Gregor Blanco stole three bases and scored three runs as the Giants continued to dominate the matchup of NL division leaders. San Francisco finished 5-1 against Atlanta this season.

Nationals 5, Diamondbacks 1: Ian Desmond and Tyler Moore each lined two-run singles in the ninth inning to break open a close game for visiting Washington.

Nationals starter Doug Fister was locked into a pitcher's duel with Brandon McCarthy before Washington pulled away.

SPORTS BRIEFS/NBA

Briefly

Hernandez indicted in double slaying

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Former New England Patriot Aaron Hernandez, who already faces a murder charge in a man's shooting death last year, was indicted Thursday on new murder charges in an unrelated 2012 double slaying in Boston, police said.

The victims in that killing, Daniel de Abreu and Saffro Furtado, were shot to death as they sat in a car in Boston's South End on July 16, 2012. Police have said they were shot by someone who drove up alongside in an SUV with Rhode Island license plates and opened fire.

Hernandez was seen on surveillance footage in the same nightclub as the victims the night of the attack, authorities have said. Prosecutors planned a news conference late Thursday morning to discuss new details in the shooting deaths.

Lawyers for Hernandez, who is awaiting trial in the separate 2013 shooting death near his home of 27-year-old Odin Lloyd in North Attleborough, did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment. Hernandez is being held without bail after pleading not guilty to murder in Lloyd's death.

Boston police wrote in an affidavit last year there is probable cause to believe that Hernandez was driving a vehicle used in the 2012 double shooting and "may have been the shooter." The affidavit was filed as police sought to search an SUV involved in the shooting and found at Hernandez's uncle's home in Bristol, Connecticut.

The SUV was covered in dust and cobwebs and had a dead battery, leading police to believe it had remained untouched in the garage for close to a year, according to the court document.

Survivor Aquilino Freire told police an SUV pulled up next to them while they were stopped, and he saw someone in the SUV's back seat laughing, according to the affidavit. Then, several gunshots were fired from the rear passenger seat into the car, Freire told police. Two other people in the car ran away, Freire said.

In other NFL news:

■ Panthers Pro Bowl defensive end Greg Hardy was released from jail on \$17,000 bail Wednesday, one day after being arrested on charges of assault on a female and communicating threats.

Hardy left jail wearing sweatpants and a black tank top. He did not speak to reporters.

Charlotte Mecklenburg County Judge Rebecca Thorne Threl called Hardy a potential threat and ordered him not to have any contact with the accuser and to attend three Alcoholics Anonymous meetings per week.

■ Quarterback Josh Johnson has returned to the San Francisco 49ers, and his former college coach, Jim Harbaugh.

Johnson was cut by the 49ers



JOSH REYNOLDS/AP

Former New England Patriot football player Aaron Hernandez, right, already facing a murder charge in a man's shooting death last year, was indicted on Thursday on new murder charges stemming from an unrelated 2012 double-slaying in Boston.

before the 2012 season, then rejoined them Wednesday after being cut two days earlier by Cincinnati.

Harbaugh took a chance on the undersized Johnson at San Diego, developing the 5-foot-11, 145-pound Oakland Tech prep star into a record-setting college QB. But current starter Colin Kaepernick emerged as the steady backup to Alex Smith going into 2012, and Scott Tolzien earned the No. 3 spot that year.

The 49ers traded for Blaine Gabbert in March, so he and Johnson could compete for the No. 2 job.

■ Former Nebraska quarterback Taylor Martinez's free-agent contract with the Philadelphia Eagles has been voided because he failed a physical.

His father, Casey Martinez, wrote in an email to The Associated Press on Wednesday that Taylor continues to struggle with a left-foot injury that dates to early last season. Casey Martinez said the Eagles let Taylor go after evaluating his medical file from Nebraska and taking X-rays of the foot.

The Eagles signed Martinez as an undrafted free agent Sunday. He played in only four games his senior season because of the injury. He left Nebraska as the program's career leader in total offense, passing yards, career touchdown passes and starts by a quarterback.

Rangers put LH starters Harrison, Perez on DL

HOUSTON — The Texas Rangers put left-handers Matt Harrison and Martin Perez on the disabled list Wednesday, and could be without both starters for an extended period.

General manager Jon Daniels said that Harrison was diagnosed with significant nerve irritation in his vertebrae. He will have an injection Friday in an attempt to alleviate the symptoms before considering other options, including surgery.

Harrison, who made only two starts last season before two operations on a herniated disk in his lower back, came out in the second inning of his start Tuesday night at Houston. Daniels said the pitcher had a tingling sensation down his left leg, similar to what he experienced before having surgery last year.

Perez has a partial tear of his ulnar collateral ligament in his left elbow. He could have an injection and rehab that could keep him out three months, or possibly have Tommy John surgery and miss a year.

Harrison was examined Wednesday by Dr. Drew Dossett, who did the two operations last year.

Daniels said there was no evi-

dence of disk herniation, but that the spondylolisthesis Harrison is now experiencing was considered a possible risk after the operations. "If it didn't work as you would hope, this would be the outcome. Unfortunately, that's come to pass," the GM said.

The options for Harrison included rehab and to live with the problem or have surgery that Daniels described as spinal fusion.

Daniels said players have returned to the major leagues after have such fusions, but there are no guarantees.

"It's more involved surgery and changes of coming back are lesser than some of the more traditional baseball surgeries," Daniels said. "If he did opt to have surgery, he would be out for the year with a chance to rehab and come in and compete in spring training."

Haas upsets Wawrinka at Italian Open

ROME — The seemingly ageless Tommy Haas upset third-seeded Stanislas Wawrinka 5-7, 6-2, 6-3 Thursday to reach the Italian Open quarterfinals.

The oldest player in the draw at 36, Haas used his expertise to give Wawrinka trouble with heavy topspin on the red clay courts at the Foro Italico.

Haas hadn't beaten a top-10 player since taking out then No. 1 Novak Djokovic in Miami more than a year ago.

In women's play on a perfectly clear day, second-seeded Li Na defeated Australian veteran Sam Stosur 6-3, 6-1 and will next meet 10th-seeded Sara Errani of Italy, who kept the crowd content by beating Czech qualifier Petra Cetkovska 6-4, 7-6 (3).

Judge says Pistorius should see psychiatrist

PRETORIA, South Africa — The judge overseeing the murder trial of Oscar Pistorius has ordered the double-amputee athlete to undergo psychiatric tests, meaning that the trial proceedings will be delayed.

The decision Wednesday by Judge Thokozile Masipa followed a request for a psychiatric evaluation by the chief prosecutor, Gerrie Nel. The prosecutor had said he had no option but to ask for it after an expert witness for the defense testified that Pistorius had an anxiety disorder that may have played a role when he fatally shot his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp.

Masipa did not immediately specify the length of the psychiatric evaluation.

Pistorius says he killed Steenkamp on Feb. 14, 2013 by mistake, thinking there was an intruder in his home. The prosecution says the Olympic runner killed her after an argument.



KATHY WILLEMS/AP

The Golden State Warriors have won the bidding war with the New York Knicks for TNT commentator and former Chicago Bulls and San Antonio Spurs guard Steve Kerr, hiring him away from the broadcast table to be their coach. Kerr agreed to a five-year, \$25 million deal on Wednesday.

Kerr takes job with Warriors

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Golden State Warriors are taking another chance on a television analyst and former NBA guard who has never been a head coach at any level.

The Warriors won the bidding war with the New York Knicks for Steve Kerr on Wednesday, hiring him away from the TNT broadcast table to be their coach. Kerr agreed to a five-year, \$25 million deal with Golden State, said his agent, Mike Tannenbaum.

The Warriors confirmed the agreement Wednesday night and said they will introduce Kerr at a news conference after the contract is complete.

Kerr had been in talks with the Knicks about becoming their coach since Phil Jackson took over as team president in March. He won three titles playing for Jackson in Chicago and another two under Gregg Popovich in San Antonio.

Kerr told NBA.com, which first reported the agreement, that going to Golden State "just felt like the right move on many levels." He said his daughter plays volleyball nearby at the University of California, Berkeley, his oldest son is in college in San Diego and his youngest son is a junior in high school.

Kerr called the offer to coach the Knicks a "tantalizing" opportunity. He said it was "agonizing" to say no to Jackson "because of what I think of him and what he's done for my career."

"I told Phil, 'I think I have to pursue this other opportunity,'" Kerr told the website. "He gave me his blessing. He said, 'Go look at it, and do what was in my heart.'"

NBA PLAYOFFS

Scoreboard

Second round

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Miami 4, Brooklyn 1

Miami 107, Brooklyn 96
Miami 94, Brooklyn 82
Brooklyn 104, Miami 90
Miami 102, Brooklyn 96

Wednesday: Miami 96, Brooklyn 94

Indiana 3, Washington 2

Washington 102, Indiana 96
Indiana 86, Washington 82

Indiana 85, Washington 63
Indiana 95, Washington 92

Washington 102, Indiana 79

Thursday: at Washington

x-Sunday: at Indiana

WESTERN CONFERENCE

San Antonio 4, Portland 1

San Antonio 116, Portland 92
San Antonio 114, Portland 97

San Antonio 118, Portland 103

Portland 103, San Antonio 92

Wednesday: San Antonio 104, Portland 82

Oklahoma City 3, L.A. Clippers 2

L.A. Clippers 122, Oklahoma City 105
Oklahoma City 112, L.A. Clippers 101

Oklahoma City 118, L.A. Clippers 112

L.A. Clippers 101, Oklahoma City 99

Oklahoma City 105, L.A. Clippers 104

Thursday: at L.A. Clippers

x-Sunday: at Oklahoma City

Wednesday

Spurs 104, Trail Blazers 82

PORTLAND — Battum 3-9 3-9 10, Aldridge 10-21 1-4 21, Lopez 5-7 2-2 12, Lillard 7-18 2-2 17, Matthews 5-10 2-2 14, Robinson 1-2 0-0 2, Barton 2-9 1-2 6, McCollum 0-3 0-0 0, Freeland 0-2 0-0 0, McLeonard 0-0 0-0 0, Claver 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 33-81 11-17 82.

SAN ANTONIO — KLeonard 9-15 1-2 22, Duncan 6-13 4-6 16, Spivey 1-2 2-4, Parker 0-2 0-0 0, Green 9-13 0-0 22, Diaw 2-2 2-4 10, Mills 2-3 0-0 2, Belinelli 1-5 2-4, Mills 8-17 0-0 18, Joseph 1-3 0-0 2, Baynes 0-0 0-0 0, Bortles 1-1 0-0 2, Ayres 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 42-89 11-16 104.

Portland 19 25 19 — 82

San Antonio 19 32 26 — 104

Three-Point Goals—Portland 4, 5-19

(Matthews 2-4, Lillard 1-4, Barton 1-4, Battum 1-6, McCollum 0-1), San Antonio 9-21

(Green 4-6, KLeonard 3-4, Mills 2-5, Parker 0-1, Belinelli 0-1, Diaw 0-2, Ginobili 0-2),

Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Portland

53 (Battum 12), San Antonio 53 (Green 9),

Assists—Portland 18 (Lillard 10), San Antonio 24 (Spivey 7), Total Fouls—Portland

16, San Antonio 19. A.—18:51 (18:77).

Heat 96, Nets 94

BROOKLYN — Johnson 15-23 1-1 34, Pierce 8-18 1-2 19, Garnett 1-3 0-0 2, Williams 7-16 0-0 17, Livingston 2-6 4-8, Anderson 1-3 0-0 2, Blatche 0-0 0-0 0, Teletovich 1-3 4-4 6, Kirilenko 1-2 2-4 4, Thornton 1-4 0-0 2. Totals 37-75 12 54.

MIAMI — James 14-15 1-17 29, Battier 0-0 0-0 0, Bosh 6-11 0-0 16, Chalmers 5-2 2-2, Wade 10-18 8-8 28, Allen 4-10 4-4 13, Assists—Brooklyn 14 (Williams 4), Miami 18 (Chalmers 7), Total Fouls—Brooklyn 21, Miami 16. A.—19:15 (19:00).

Brooklyn 22 27 26 — 94

San Antonio 22 19 24 — 96

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SPORTS



Heat, Spurs advance to conference finals

Page 31

The one to watch

Post positions



Horse	Jockey	Trainer	Odds
1 Dynamic Impact	Mena	Casse	12-1
2 General a Rod	Castellano	Maker	15-1
3 California Chrome	Espinosa	Sherman	3-5
4 Ring Weekend	Garcia	Motion	20-1
5 Bayern	Napravnik	Baffert	10-1
6 Ria Antonia	Borel	Amoss	30-1
7 Kid Cruz	Pimentel	Rice	20-1
8 Social Inclusion	Contreras	Azpuru	5-1
9 Pablo Del Monte	Sanchez	Ward	20-1
10 Ride On Curlin	Rosario	Gowan	10-1

SOURCE: Preakness.com

MCT

California Chrome's quest for 1st Triple Crown since 1978 set to continue from favorable Preakness post

BY CHILDS WALKER
The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — Steve Coburn hasn't stopped dreaming.

Throughout the week leading up to the Kentucky Derby, California Chrome's co-owner predicted victory to anyone who'd listen, saying he felt it from his gut and his heart.

Coburn, wearing his trademark cowboy hat, sang the same confident tune Wednesday after his champion drew the No. 3 post position for Saturday's Preakness Stakes. His strong belief was echoed in the morning line set by Pimlico Race Course handicapper Keith Feustle, which has California Chrome as a massive 3-5 favorite.

"I'm great with No. 3," Coburn said after the evening draw, held on the infield at Pimlico. "If he holds his position, I think we got this pretty well sewed up here. It is a dream coming true. I knew this horse would win the Kentucky Derby. And I've got a strong feeling

'I knew this horse would win the Kentucky Derby. And I've got a strong feeling he's going to win the Preakness. I've got something within me that I feel, and I can't explain it.'

Steve Coburn
California Chrome's co-owner

he's going to win the Preakness. I've got something within me that I feel, and I can't explain it."

California Chrome's charmed existence continued with a draw that will put him near the middle of a 10-horse field as he continues his quest to become the first Triple Crown winner since Affirmed in 1978.

An unlucky draw can be an impediment to the strongest of favorites, as Orb learned last year when he went off as a 3-5 choice from the No. 1 post but couldn't find his way off the rail in time to catch Oxbow.

An awed gasp swept through the crowd at the draw when California Chrome was announced as such a massive favorite.

SEE PREAKNESS ON PAGE 25

California Chrome, with Victor Espinosa up, wins the Kentucky Derby on May 3 in Louisville, Ky. California Chrome was installed as a 3-5 favorite for Saturday's Preakness Stakes in Baltimore.

CHARLES BERTRAM, LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER/MCT